

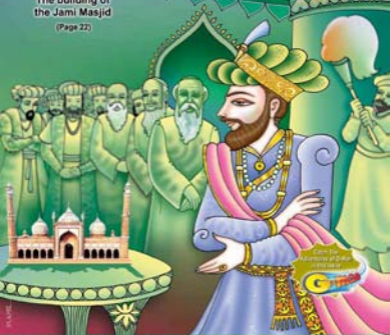


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The building of
the Jami Masjid

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Q	U	G	N	I	T	A	K	S	T
L	M	C	N	D	A	G	H	I	B
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P	Q	E	S	M	O	C	E	T	E
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B	A	S	K	E	T	B	A	L	L

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EMPHASIS ON EDUCATION



We turned the calendar
to find which International Days
are generally observed during
December. World AIDS Day is followed by

a Day for the Abolition of Slavery, another devoted to Disabled Persons,
then Human Rights Day, and International Migrants Day.

All these days have a common objective—to uphold the right of each individual to
lead a dignified life, with at least the minimum of facilities to feel good at the end of every
day, coupled with the satisfaction that those dear and near also lead happy, peaceful lives.

Of course, such ideal conditions cannot spring up all of a sudden. Naturally, people with like-
minded views form groups to supplement the efforts of the government and its social welfare
departments.

Most of these organisations start with the basic welfare programme of ensuring primary education to
those who, for various reasons, cannot be physically present in regular schools. It will be worth pondering
why children are not present in schools. More than anything else, it is the problem of dropouts. Children
are required elsewhere, at home to look after the younger siblings when both parents are away at work, or
at a place where they can earn some money by doing manual labour and thus augment the family's income.

Another reason is ill-health mainly due to malnutrition, living in unhygienic surroundings, and want
of timely medical attention. Free mid-day meal scheme and/or distribution of milk/eggs touches only
the fringe of the problem. Children have to have a full meal at least twice a day. If such children can
be brought to school and given education, half the battle would have been won.

There are several groups, identified as NGOs, with modest beginnings but enjoying
speedy success. Reason: they tapped areas which hitherto had not tested water.

As the year draws to a close, let us all support these NGOs, who are making
efforts to ensure that "every child is in school and he/she is learning well".

We wish all our readers and well-wishers

A MERRY CHRISTMAS

Visit us at : <http://www.chandamama.org>

Peace is not an absence of war, it is a virtue,
a state of mind, a disposition for benevolence, confidence, justice.

-Benedict de Spinoza

Finality is not the language of politics.

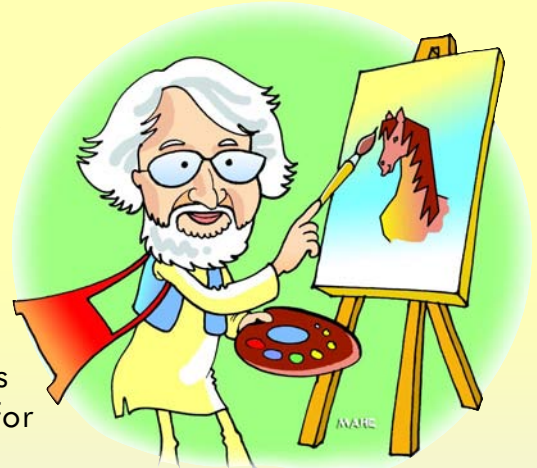
The wisdom of the wise and the experience of the aged
are perpetuated by quotations.

- Benjamin Disraeli

Newsflash

Paintings by order

India's most widely known artist, M.F.Hussain, is currently busy completing an assignment of preparing 100 paintings for which he has already been paid a fee of—guess— Rs101 crores! The order was placed by a Mumbai-based technocrat, Guru Swarup Srivastava. An IIT post-graduate, he is now engaged in exporting iron ore to China and Hong Kong. The businessman does not intend hanging the paintings in his residence. He proposes to sell them to raise funds for philanthropic work.



Threat to Taj

The Taj Mahal is 350 years old and the Government has already launched celebrations lasting a year. Now comes a threat to this world famous monument, considered one of the wonders of the modern world. Two of its minarets facing the Yamuna at the rear have shown signs of leaning—a phenomenon detected even 50 years ago. According to Prof.Ramnath of Rajasthan University, in the last few years the inclination had steadily increased. He opines that it is all due to the river drying up.

It is the river which has been making the monument keep its balance on the foundations. It may be remembered that the four minarets had been originally given a tilt towards outside so that they would not fall on the main structure in the centre.

Protection to statue

Where Swami Vivekananda meditated, sitting alone on a rock lashed by sea waves on all four sides, now stands the Vivekananda Rock Memorial off the Kanyakumari coast. Not far away from the Vivekananda rock is another rock on which the Tamil Nadu Government has erected a statue of the poet-saint Tiruvalluvar, author of the much venerated *Tirukkural*. Recently it was decided to give a poly-silicon coating to the four year old, 133ft tall statue to protect it from the ravages of nature. The work of coating, done at a cost of Rs 27 lakh, was completed in about four months time. The statue can now be approached by visitors.



**NEW TALES
OF KING
VIKRAM AND
THE VETALA**

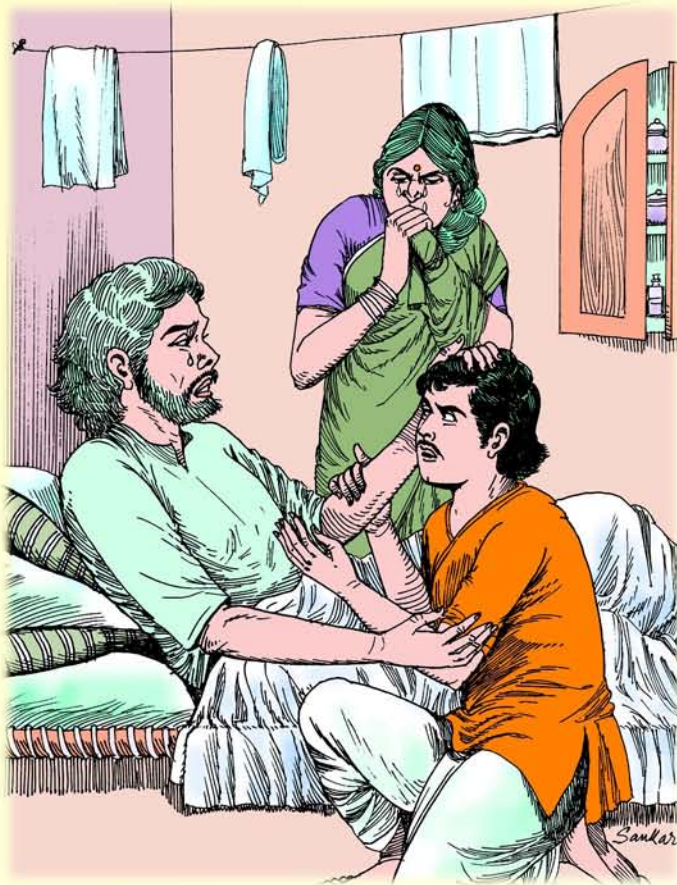
The magic seeds

It was a dark, moonless night. Occasional flashes of lightning lit up the sombre scene and caused an eerie dance of jerky and frightening shadows in the cremation ground. Occasionally, the spine-chilling howl of a jackal or the blood-curdling laughter of evil spirits cut into the silence that hung, shroud like over the area. Altogether, it was a scene that could strike terror into the bravest of hearts. But nothing could daunt the intrepid King Vikram. Once again, he made his way to the ancient gnarled tree where the corpse was hanging. A bone crunched under his feet and a screeching ghost rose from the dust in shuddering frenzy as he marched ahead.

Unperturbed, the king reached the tree and brought down the corpse. Slinging it astride his shoulder, he had just begun his return journey when the vampire that possessed the corpse said, "O King! I fail to understand why you are toiling like this. Is it for your own benefit, or to help someone else? If it is in the name of service that you are risking life and limb, it is an utterly foolish pursuit. To illustrate, let me tell you the story of Parmeshwar who ruined not only his own life but that of his son, all in the name of charity and service." The vampire then narrated the following story.

There once lived, in a village named Jagannathpuri, a man named Parmeshwar. People knew him as a great philanthropist; he went out of his way to help others, even by selling off or mortgaging his property. Soon he became a pauper. On his deathbed, he told his son, Arjun, "I've done you a great injustice, my son. A father is expected to leave a good legacy for his son; but I'm leaving you a terrible legacy of debt! But don't lose heart. Continue helping others, as I have done. If ever you find yourself in need of help or guidance, go to our village priest,





Ramanand. It was he who introduced me to this way of life.” Those were his last words.

Soon after Parmeshwar’s death, his house was besieged by his creditors who stormed in and took away whatever they could lay their hands on. But all the debts could not be liquidated with this; Arjun found that he still had to repay a loan of a thousand gold coins; and he did not have a single *paisa* to pay up. He was in utter despair.

Suddenly, he remembered his father’s advice. He decided to call on Ramanand to see if he could help him. The priest welcomed him and said, “Your father performed many acts of charity. You will surely reap the benefits of his piety!”

Arjun, who by now was in depths of despair, bitterly retorted, “Sir, my father spent a whole lifetime helping others; but what did he gain? Nothing!”

“My boy, it appears that you don’t know how your father lived,” said Ramanand. “In his childhood, he was stricken by a terrible disease that caused its victims waste away until they died. The patient would also suffer excruciating pain, as if his body were being endlessly

pricked by needles. It was then that your father took to practising charity as a way of life, and it was this which cured him.”

However, Arjun did not believe this story. He demanded some proof. The priest directed him to meet Raghunath the physician, who had treated Parmeshwar for his illness. Raghunath confirmed the story, telling Arjun that Parmeshwar had indeed been beset by a terrible disease. “I had to tell your father that it was incurable,” he told Arjun. “I’ve no idea how he finally got cured; it’s nothing short of a miracle! Not only did he get completely cured, but afterwards he never had a day’s illness for the rest of his life! I believe the priest, Ramanand, had something to do with it.”

Now Arjun was convinced of Ramanand’s claim. He went back to him and asked for guidance. Ramanand handed him a bagful of seeds. “These are magic seeds. If you sow one seed, it will grow into a plant in a day. Within a week, the plant will grow to a gigantic tree, providing shelter to men and beasts and a home to birds. Planting these seeds amounts to an act of piety.”

Arjun thanked him and took the bag of seeds. Going in search of a suitable spot to plant the first seed, he reached the outskirts of the village. His eyes fell upon a barren, arid plot with not a tree in sight. ‘This seems to be an ideal place,’ he thought and began digging there.

While digging, a gold coin came into his hands. It had the figures of Goddess Lakshmi and Lord Vishnu embossed on its sides. ‘What a lucky break! This must be my reward for my first good deed,’ Arjun said to himself.

After planting the seed, he continued his journey. Soon he reached the neighbouring village. Feeling tired, he sat down on the verandah of the first house he saw.

Just then the owner of the house, Ramesh, came out. He suspected that the stranger might be a thief. Despite Arjun’s protests, Ramesh searched his person.

“My God!” shouted Ramesh as he came upon the gold coin. “Why, this is the sacred coin from my *pooja* room. I had lost it six months ago! So I was right, after all. You are a thief!”

Ramesh summoned the rest of his family. They identified the coin, and showered abuses on Arjun.

Poor Arjun, unable to bear the unjust accusations any longer, cried out at last. "Please listen to me! I'm no thief. I'm the son of Parmeshwar of Jagannathpuri. Arjun then told them his story. "While digging, I came across the gold coin. I did not steal it!"

Arjun's story took Ramesh by surprise. Like others in his village, he too had heard much about Parmeshwar, the famous philanthropist of Jagannathpuri. Arjun's story had an unmistakeable ring of truth to it and Ramesh realised that he himself had erred in his judgment. The son of such a great man could not possibly be a thief.

Ramesh apologised to Arjun for his misbehaviour. He offered him refreshments and requested him to be his guest for a while. Arjun agreed. As they were chatting, on his host's prompting he related the whole story of his misfortune.

Ramesh listened attentively. He was feeling quite guilty for having harassed an honest and good-natured man, and wished to make amends. At the end of the narration, an idea struck him. He said, "I shall take you to our village *zamindar*. A meeting with him would benefit both of you." Arjun agreed.

While on their way, Ramesh told him all about the problem the *zamindar* was facing. Two years ago, his young and beautiful daughter, Radhika, had been suddenly beset by a debilitating disease. Apparently it was the same disease which had afflicted Arjun's father, for, the symptoms were the same. She had wasted away to a mere skeleton, and was suffering excruciating pain as if she was pricked by needles all over her body, to boot! The physicians attending on her had given up all hope. They had given her a month or two to live, at the most.

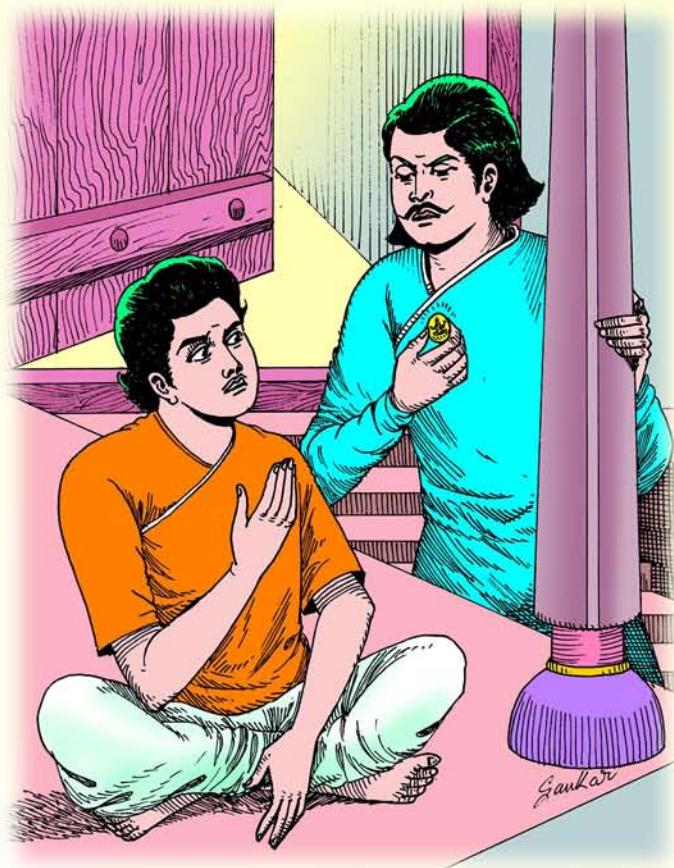
Ramesh said to Arjun, "This is where you come in. A learned physician, who was specially called in from afar to examine the patient, has told the *zamindar* that there was only one cure for the disease. If Radhika could spend a day in a grove of a hundred trees, all sprouted from the magic seeds that grow in a week's time, and breathe in that air, she would be cured! Now, you have the magic seeds which can save her life. If you cure her, you will not only have done an act of great service but also earned the *zamindar's* goodwill and gratitude – both of which would surely benefit you!"

They met the *zamindar*, who was delighted by Arjun's story. He quickly identified a plot on his vast estate which was suitable for growing a hundred trees, and directed Arjun to plant his seeds there.

Alas! Arjun had only ninety-nine seeds with him (as he had already sown one seed outside the village). After he had finished his task, the *zamindar* sent word to the physician, asking him if that would do. Back came the reply that it would most certainly not do – for the cure to take effect, there had to be exactly a hundred trees, not even one less!

As the crestfallen *zamindar* was wondering what to do, unexpected help arrived in the form of a tantrik who claimed to have a remedy for the disease. But it was a somewhat bizarre remedy. "The girl can be cured if her disease is transferred to someone else," he declared. "I have the power to do this transfer. But there is a condition – the other person has to come forward voluntarily and be fully ready to accept all the consequences!"

For a moment, there was a stunned silence. Then, both the *zamindar* and his wife stepped forward, proclaiming their willingness to take upon themselves their



daughter's ailment. But the tantrik, after staring at each one in turn, finally declared, "I'm sorry, but neither of you is fit for this experiment!"

The next moment, Arjun stepped forward to tell the tantrik that he was ready to accept the disease so that Radhika would get cured. The tantrik muttered some incantations and splashed some water on him. Lo and behold, the next moment Radhika got up from her bed, the picture of perfect health! But Arjun groaned in pain and collapsed on the ground as if he was about to die.

Before long, the priest Ramanand heard of what was happening in the next village and reached the *zamindar's* house to meet Arjun. He said, "Surely Arjun could be cured by the air of the hundred-tree grove. But what a pity that I have no more seeds left! Ah, well, Arjun is as great a philanthropist as his father. May God come to his rescue!"

As the days passed, the seeds sown by Arjun took root and grew into large trees. Arjun was taken to sit in the shade of the grove. By evening, he was fully cured of the disease!

Meanwhile, Radhika had fallen in love with the large-hearted young man who had so selflessly taken her sufferings on himself to help her. Her parents, who too were impressed by Arjun's sacrifice, fell in with her wishes and got the two married.

Concluding the story at this point, the vampire shot the following questions at King Vikram: "Parmeshwar might have got his disease cured by his philanthropy, but

he lost all his wealth. As for Arjun, his selfless service caused him to reach the verge of death by a dreaded disease! So, what good did it do him? Secondly, how did Arjun get cured by the trees though there were only 99 of them? And finally, why did the tantrik say that Radhika's parents were unfit to take the disease on themselves? Answer my questions, O King, or else your head would explode into a thousand fragments!"

King Vikram calmly replied, "Helping others is definitely a noble and desirable thing. Although initially it might be difficult to practise, ultimately it brings good results. Remember that Parmeshwar was cured of a dreaded, incurable disease only by virtue of his philanthropy! In Arjun's case, too, although he had to undergo so many travails, eventually he was rewarded for his nobility by becoming the heir to the *zamindar's* wealth. This is the answer for your second question also – obviously, the merit earned by his piety was what cured Arjun though there were only 99 trees. And lastly, Radhika's parents volunteered to take on her disease out of selfish motives – because she was their daughter and it was, after all, their duty to look after her. But Arjun's readiness to accept the disease speaks volumes about his totally unselfish nature!"

As soon as he had finished speaking, the vampire, along with the corpse, got off his shoulder with a jerk and flew back to the tree. With a little sigh, King Vikram squared his shoulders and retraced his steps towards the tree, his dogged determination evident in his steady gait.



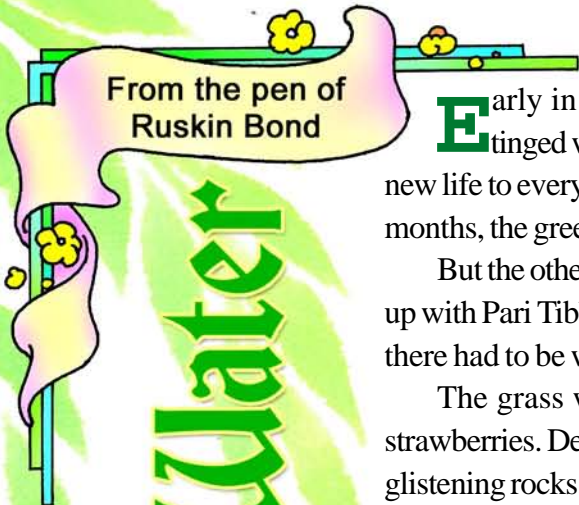


Emperors, Caliphs, Sultans and Nawabs are how rulers of countries and kingdoms are usually known as. Isn't it strange then that India was once ruled by a 'Slave dynasty'? How did this come about? In 1192, Muhammad of Ghori in Afghanistan invaded Punjab. But he did not wish to stay back faraway from Afghanistan. He appointed his faithful slave, Qutbuddin Aybak, as his viceroy in Delhi which was then part of Punjab. Aybak and his heirs ruled for nearly 300 years. They came to be known as the Slave Dynasty. It was Aybak who built the 78m tall Qutb Minar in Delhi to commemorate his victories.

Saints and sages were the people who first discovered the spiritual as well as medicinal properties of the brown coloured beads called the Rudraksha. The beads threaded with a metal wire are nowadays used as a rosary or worn around the neck or the wrist. The beads are categorised according to the number of lines (Mukhi) they have. The five or panchamukhi is the most commonly found; the 21 mukhi bead is the rarest. The one mukhi bead is believed to bring fame and fortune, while the four and six mukhi beads bless one with education. The three mukhi bead is supposed to ensure good health.



Kalaripayattu is well known as the martial art of Kerala. But its influence and some of its elements can be found in many dance and theatre forms of that State, including Kathakali, the classical theatre form of Kerala. The dance forms in which the elements of Kalaripayattu are seen are *Kolkali*, *Velakali*, and *Yatrakali*. It will be interesting to know that a Buddhist monk called Boddhidharma took the art of Kalaripayattu to China in the 5th century A.D. He chose the Shaolin temple to teach this art. In course of time Kalaripayattu gave birth to such martial arts as Judo, Karate, and Kung Fu.



From the pen of
Ruskin Bond

Tenacity of Mountain Water

Early in summer, the grass on the hills is still a pale yellowish green, tinged with brown, and that is how it remains until the monsoon rains bring new life to everything that subsists on the stony Himalayan soil. And then, for four months, the greens are deep and dark and emerald bright.

But the other day, taking a narrow path that left the dry Mussoorie ridge to link up with Pari Tibba (Fairy Hill), I ran across a patch of lush green grass, and I knew there had to be water there.

The grass was soft and springy, spotted with the crimson of small, wild strawberries. Delicate maidenhair, my favourite fern, grew from a cluster of moist, glistening rocks. Moving the ferns a little, I discovered the spring, a freshet of clear sparkling water.

I never cease to wonder at the tenacity of water—its ability to make its way through various strata of rock, zigzagging, backtracking, finding space, cunningly discovering faults and fissures in the mountain, and sometimes travelling underground for great distances before emerging into the open. Of course, there's no stopping water. For, no matter how tiny that little trickle, it has to go somewhere!

Like this little spring. At first I thought it was too small to go anywhere, that it would dry up at the edge of the path. Then I discovered that the grass remained soft and green for some distance along the verge, and that there was moisture beneath the grass. This wet stretch ended abruptly; but, on looking further, I saw that it continued on the other side of the path, after briefly going underground again.

I decided to follow its fortunes as it disappeared beneath a tunnel of tall grass and bracken fern. Slithering down a stony slope, I found myself in a small ravine, and there I discovered that my little spring had grown, having been joined by the waters of another spring bubbling up from beneath a patch of primroses.

A short distance away, a spotted forktail stood on a rock, surveying this marriage of the waters. His long, forked tail moved slowly up and down. He paid no attention to me, being totally absorbed in the movements of a water spider. A swift peck, and the spider vanished, completing the bird's breakfast. Thirsty, I cupped my hands and drank a little water. So did the forktail. We had a perennial supply of pure aqua minerale all to ourselves!

There was now a rivulet to follow, and I continued down the ravine until I came to a small pool that was fed not only by my brook (I was already thinking of it as my very own!) but by a little cascade of water coming down from a rocky ledge. I climbed a little way up the rocks and entered a small cave, in which there was just enough space for crouching down. Water dripped and trickled off its roof and sides.

And most wonderful of all, some of these drops created tiny rainbows, for a ray of sunlight had struck through a crevice in the cave roof making the

droplets of moisture radiant with all the colours of the spectrum.

When I emerged from the cave, I saw a pair of pine martins drinking at the pool. As soon as they saw me, they were up and away, bounding across the ravine and into the trees.

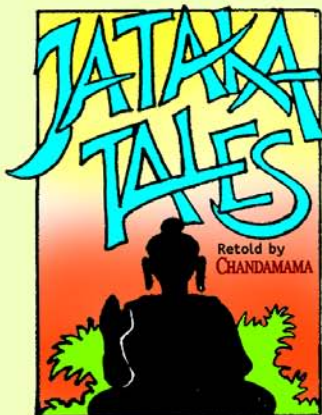
The brook was now a small stream, but I could not follow it much farther, because the hill went into a steep decline and the water tumbled over large, slippery boulders, becoming a waterfall and then a noisy little torrent as it sped towards the valley.

Climbing up the sides of the ravine to the spur of Pari Tibba, I could see the distant silver of a meandering river, and I knew my little stream was destined to become part of it; and that the river would be joined by another that could be seen slipping over the far horizon, and that their combined waters would enter the great Ganga, further downstream.

This mighty river would, in turn, wander over the rich alluvial plains of northern India, finally merging into the ocean near the Bay of Bengal.

And the ocean, what is it but another droplet in the universe, in the greater scheme of things? No greater than the glistening drop of water that helped start it all, where the grass grows greener around my little spring on the mountain.





Manoja, a young lion, lived in a forest near Benares with his family.



One day while hunting, he came across Giri, a jackal. Giri flattered Manoja.



I wish to wait upon you, my lord.



And life became easier for Giri. One day, he felt an urge to taste horseflesh.

He broached the subject to Manoja.

Have you tasted horse meat?



It's very tasty. Shall we kill a horse today?

Where can we find horses?

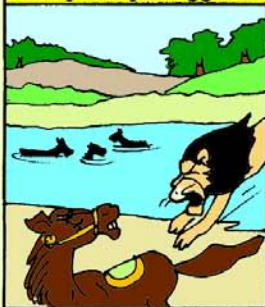


They are in the city, near the river. Come, I'll take you there.



Giri's mouth watered. Manoja would hunt a horse for him.

They went to the river where the king's horses had their bath every day. Manoja slew a horse easily. They dragged it to their den.



Slurp... It's tasty!



But Manoja's father did not approve.



These horses belong to the king. Don't risk your life by killing them.

And this Giri is a wily guy. He'll betray you in times of danger.



But Manoja carried on, ignoring his father's advice.



Soon the king came to know about these raids.

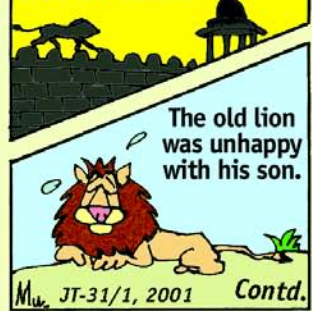


Build a water tank inside the city. Let the horses bathe there.

But this did not stop Manoja.

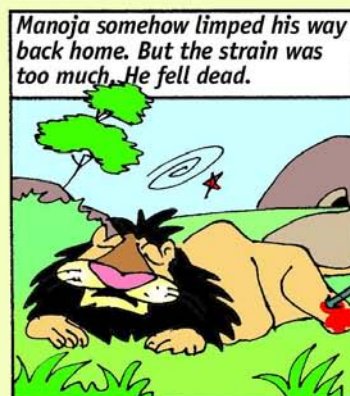
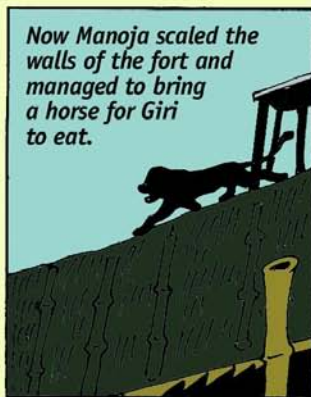
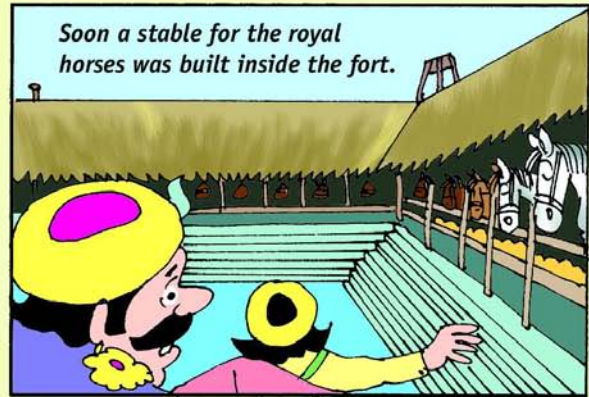
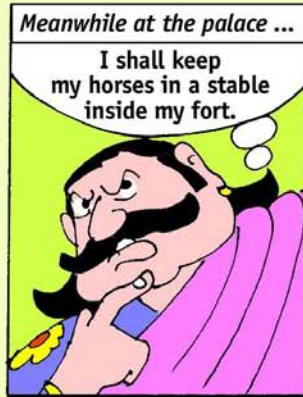
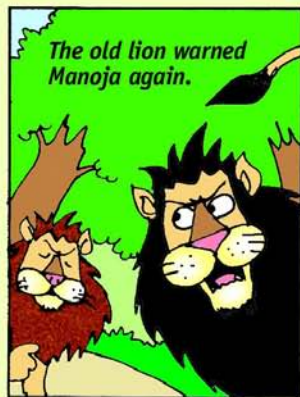


Goaded by Giri, he climbed the city walls and took the horses.



The old lion was unhappy with his son.

M... JT-31/1, 2001 Contd.



JT-31/2, 2001

The End

Trekking in the wild

We were dead tired and no sight was as pleasing as that of young Dolma running down the mountainside to greet us. It was past 6 p.m., and we had been trekking to Rumbak village since ten that morning. There was no sign of any village on the route that we had taken.

All along we kept wondering if we would ever reach our destination, and towards late evening we even started to make plans about spending the night outdoors. “That huge rock may shield us from cold winds,” said a friend. “Yes, and we may run short of food, but the stream will give us all the icy water we want!” said another.

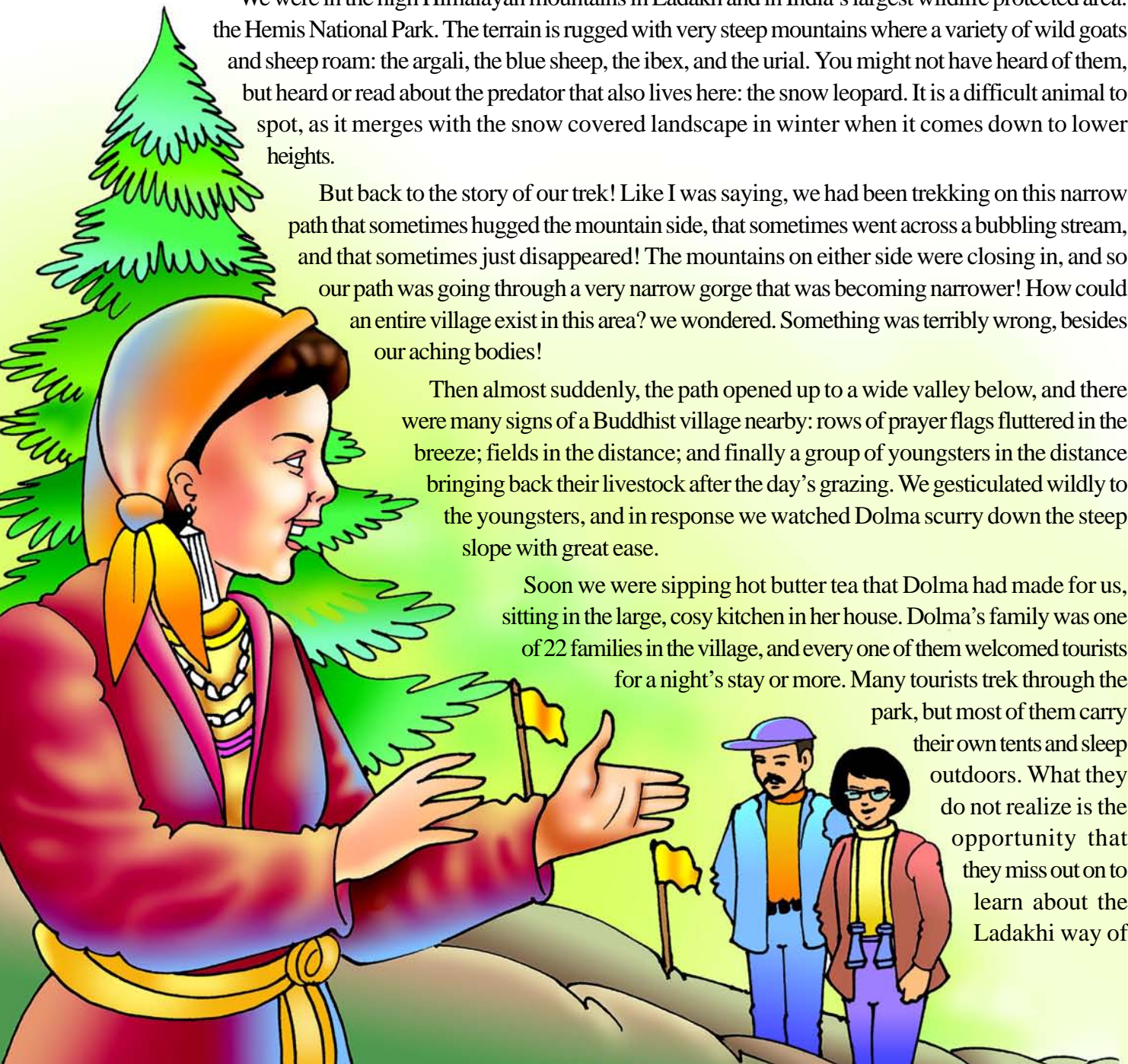
We were in the high Himalayan mountains in Ladakh and in India’s largest wildlife protected area: the Hemis National Park. The terrain is rugged with very steep mountains where a variety of wild goats and sheep roam: the argali, the blue sheep, the ibex, and the urial. You might not have heard of them, but heard or read about the predator that also lives here: the snow leopard. It is a difficult animal to spot, as it merges with the snow covered landscape in winter when it comes down to lower heights.

But back to the story of our trek! Like I was saying, we had been trekking on this narrow path that sometimes hugged the mountain side, that sometimes went across a bubbling stream, and that sometimes just disappeared! The mountains on either side were closing in, and so our path was going through a very narrow gorge that was becoming narrower! How could an entire village exist in this area? we wondered. Something was terribly wrong, besides our aching bodies!

Then almost suddenly, the path opened up to a wide valley below, and there were many signs of a Buddhist village nearby: rows of prayer flags fluttered in the breeze; fields in the distance; and finally a group of youngsters in the distance bringing back their livestock after the day’s grazing. We gesticulated wildly to the youngsters, and in response we watched Dolma scurry down the steep slope with great ease.

Soon we were sipping hot butter tea that Dolma had made for us, sitting in the large, cosy kitchen in her house. Dolma’s family was one of 22 families in the village, and every one of them welcomed tourists for a night’s stay or more. Many tourists trek through the

park, but most of them carry their own tents and sleep outdoors. What they do not realize is the opportunity that they miss out on to learn about the Ladakhi way of



life. We watched butter tea (a decoction of black tea into which a generous amount of butter is churned) being made in a large cylindrical vessel, ate Ladakhi dishes like *skew* and *thukpa* with Dolma's family, learned how they prepare for winter by drying food items and storing fuel wood and, above all, experienced the generous and warm spirit that Ladakhi hospitality is endowed with. We stayed with Dolma's family for two days. We learned how each family in Rumbak earns about four thousand rupees a year on an average from tourism. The amount might seem small to you, but do remember that the tourist season is short and coincides with the warm summer months between June and August. Besides such offers of home-stays (as they are called in tourism lingo), the villagers also offer tired trekkers some food and drink from a small café that they take turns to manage.

What makes such activities really heartening is the fact that a small proportion of all earnings through tourism is put aside in a special fund which is used by the villagers for work related to preserving their environment. A year ago, the local people of Rumbak undertook a clean up of all the garbage that the trekkers had left behind. Sacks of garbage were carried out of the national park on hired ponies.

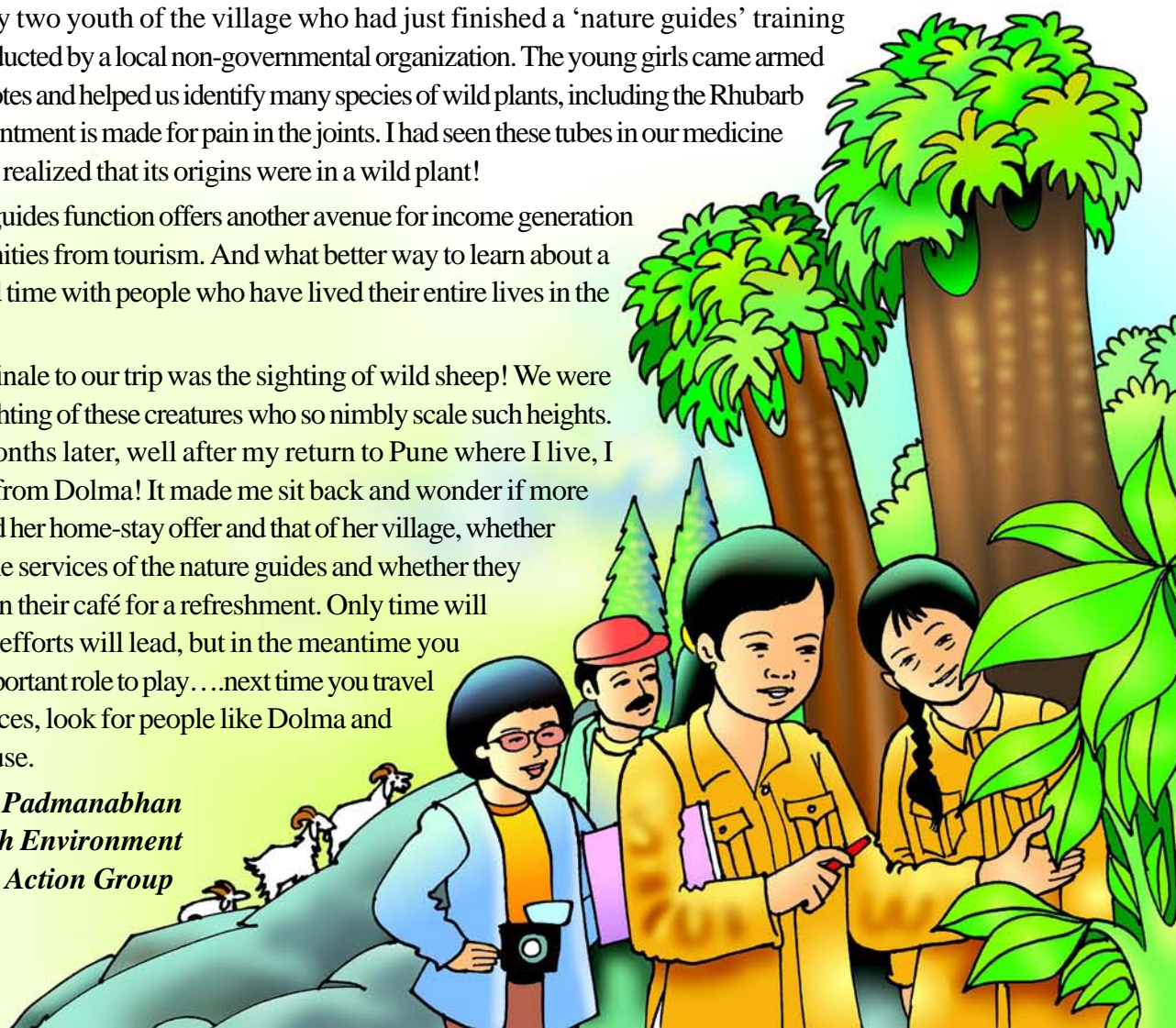
This little action on the part of the villagers speaks volumes. When local people are allowed to get some earning from the tourism activities of the natural area where they live (the national park in this case), their commitment to protect the area increases. When outsiders earn all the tourist revenue from an area, through tourist lodges or hotels that they build or through tourist packages that they offer, then commitment to the wildlife and to other natural resources is usually weak.

Our stay in Rumbak was enriched by a day trek that we did to a nearby pass. We were accompanied by two youth of the village who had just finished a 'nature guides' training programme conducted by a local non-governmental organization. The young girls came armed with their field notes and helped us identify many species of wild plants, including the Rhubarb from which an ointment is made for pain in the joints. I had seen these tubes in our medicine shops, but never realized that its origins were in a wild plant!

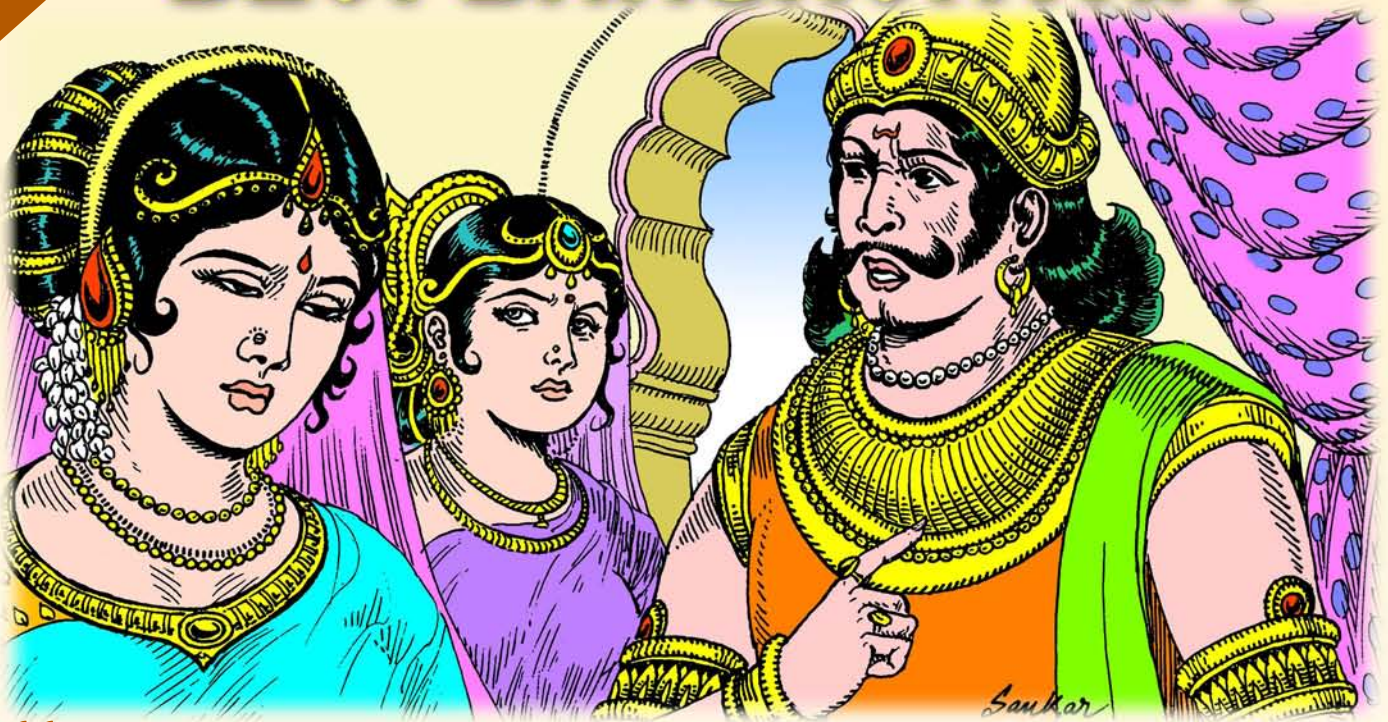
The nature guides function offers another avenue for income generation to local communities from tourism. And what better way to learn about a place than spend time with people who have lived their entire lives in the area!

The grand finale to our trip was the sighting of wild sheep! We were excited at the sighting of these creatures who so nimbly scale such heights. Many, many months later, well after my return to Pune where I live, I received a card from Dolma! It made me sit back and wonder if more trekkers had used her home-stay offer and that of her village, whether they had hired the services of the nature guides and whether they had stopped by in their café for a refreshment. Only time will tell where these efforts will lead, but in the meantime you and I have an important role to play...next time you travel out to scenic places, look for people like Dolma and support their cause.

- Sujatha Padmanabhan
Kalpavriksh Environment
Action Group



GLIMPSES OF THE DEVI BHAGAVATAM



“**F**ather,” whispered the princess, “even a casual look at the audience tells me that most of those young men are conceited, arrogant and given to weaknesses. Why should I be paraded in front of their sinful eyes? You know that I would marry none but Sudarshan. Why don’t you announce my decision to the assembly and bid them good- bye?”

The king appreciated his daughter’s sentiments. It was for her to choose her bridegroom and she had already made her choice.

Although he felt embarrassed, King Subahu went forward and addressed the assembly. “My daughter feels that it will be an exercise in futility for her to be introduced to all the suitors. She has already decided to marry Prince Sudarshan. Believe me, I had no knowledge of her mind when I convened the assembly. I request you to accept my humble gifts which I should be shortly sending to your camps and then to return to your kingdoms peacefully. I seek your good wishes for my daughter.”

The invitees appreciated the stand taken by their host except King Yudhajit, who stood up and shouted angrily: “King Subahu, it is in your foolishness that you have decided to marry your daughter to a worthless youth hiding in a forest. You have convened an assembly of princes. It is the right of the most deserving one in the assembly to claim your daughter’s hand. I demand that you choose my grandson for your daughter’s husband. If you defy my suggestion, I would wage a war against you. I had once earlier pardoned Sudarshan. This time I’ll put an end to him if he stands in my way. Know you, O Subahu, that all your friends together cannot match my strength!”

Subahu, the King of Kashi, was stunned at the threat held out by King Yudhajit. He silently went inside his castle and told his queen, “I’m afraid, we cannot avert a crisis unless our daughter changes her mind and agrees to marry someone other than Sudarshan.”

The queen told the princess, “My child, Yudhajit is a

12. THE SECRET WEDDING

cruel man. How can you ever be happy living under his threat? I don't mind what he might do to us. But I cannot be in peace worrying about your fate if you marry Sudarshan."

The princess kept quiet for a moment. Then she said in a firm voice, addressing her parents, "There are only two ways open to me: either I take my own life or you marry me to Sudarshan. Should you let me marry him, we should leave for the forest. Some wicked princes might give us a chase. Don't worry. God will take care of us."

The king and queen felt deeply moved. The king said, "Shashikala, how can we live if you are no more? Isn't your safe living that I am now worried about? Let me keep a test before the princes and announce that the one to pass the test would win your hand. I feel confident that none but Sudarshan would pass it."

The princess laughed. "Father, what assurance is there that Yudhajit would leave us in peace even if Sudarshan were to pass the test? No, father, let us get it straight. Have faith in the Grace of the Divine Mother and let me marry Sudarshan, come what may!"

The indulgent father agreed to his daughter's suggestion. He appeared before the assembly of the invitees and told them, "I request you to retire to your camps for today. You'll know my decision tomorrow."

The assembly dispersed. The king took his general into confidence. The general posted guards around the castle.

It was night. At an auspicious hour, Shashikala's marriage with Sudarshan was performed.

"My dear sister! I entrust my loving daughter to you," the king told Sudarshan's mother Queen Manorama.

"You're a noble soul, brother! It speaks of your courage and kindness that you let your charming daughter marry my son who lives in exile," said Manorama.

King Subahu responded, "Sister, no longer should you consider yourself to be hapless. Myself, my castle, my army, and my kingdom are at your disposal. I do not expect much trouble. But should there be any, I'm ready to face it with all my might. I have prayfully submitted my problem to the Divine Mother—and I now have no fear!"

"In your speech I hear the voice of God. I feel as if our luck has begun to take a turn towards the better. My

innocent son, who should be enjoying the luxury of his palace, has been living in a forest. Maybe, the time has come for him to assert himself," said Manorama.

The marital music was at first played softly. But soon the musicians became over enthusiastic. They played their instruments louder and louder.

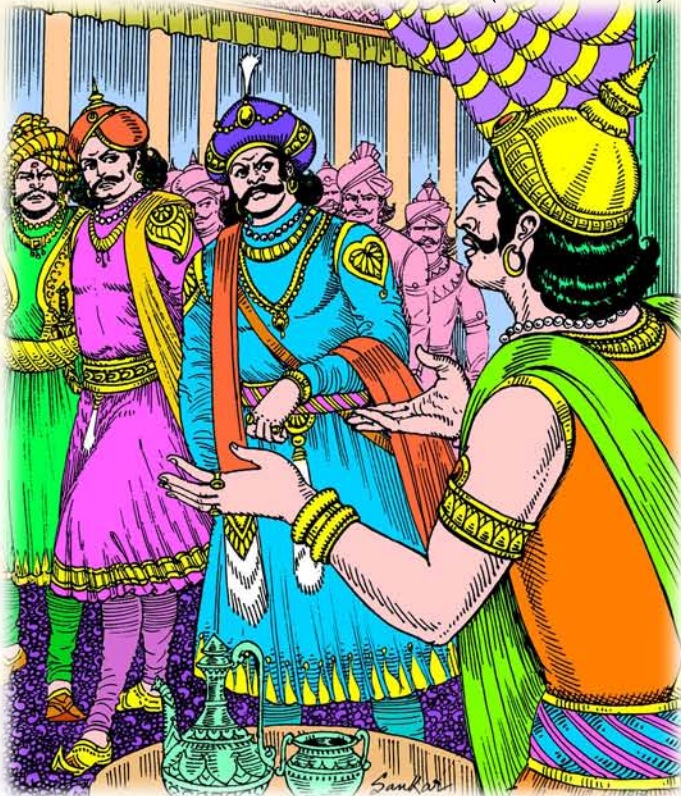
"What is this? Is King Subahu performing his daughter's marriage without our knowledge?" some of the guests asked some others, at dawn.

Before long the king met them and said, "Be pleased to come in and bless the newly-wed couple. I must confess that I had to marry my daughter off to the bridegroom of her choice rather secretly, for I feared trouble from some quarters."

It was obvious that the guests did not take the king's announcement kindly.

The king understood their minds. He said again, "My noble friends, please do not misunderstand me. I tried my best to convince my daughter that she should appear before you all and make her choice. But she refused to do so. She even threatened to kill herself if I did not let her marry Prince Sudarshan. You are a conscientious lot. You will excuse me, I trust. Please come in and join the feast."

(To continue)





The building of the Jami Masjid

You have already read how emperor Shah Jahan shifted his capital from Agra and built the brand new citadel of Red Fort. But a city could not be considered complete without a mosque grand enough and big enough to match it. So, the emperor got busy trying to select the proper site for his mosque. There was a raised piece of land known as Bhojla Pahar facing the southern gate of

stone of a royal mosque was a very special privilege. He had been pondering the question and was wondering whom he should ask. He added that he already had a bright idea. He strongly felt that the honour should be given to the person who had never missed his midnight prayer to date, *whoever he might be*. He could very well be a commoner or someone from the nobility. It did

not matter who he was so long as he fulfilled this condition.

Emperor Shah Jahan made the announcement and looked at the assembled crowd expectantly. He was sure many would stand up and claim the privilege and began to wonder how he should select just one person out of so many. Then it struck him that the silence was unusually long! In fact no one had spoken at all! How strange! Surely there must be more than one person in his kingdom who had never missed his midnight prayer? Were they afraid to speak up for some reason? He looked at the maulavis. "Yes? Which of you should I select for this job?" he asked them directly. "Please speak up. You

the Red Fort. It seemed the ideal place for building a mosque. Everyone agreed that it was indeed the right location, and the builders got ready to start their job.

There is an interesting story how the foundation stone was laid. It was indeed a grand occasion. The day was October 6, 1650. Everyone had assembled to see the laying of the foundation stone. Shah Jahan addressed the nobles, maulavis and the people who had gathered, and impressed it on them that the laying of the foundation

know what a great honour it is."

But the maulavis hung their heads and said nothing. Not one of them met the emperor's eyes.

"What! None of you?" cried Shah Jahan incredulously. "I don't believe this! Surely there must be someone among you - at least one - who has never missed his midnight prayers to date?"

"We never miss it, as a rule, Jahan panah," answered one of the maulavis, "but we have had to miss out

sometimes due to unavoidable circumstances, like a death in the family, illness or some such necessary reason. There are some amongst us who have not missed it more than once. But truth compels us to admit that there is no one among us who had to miss at least one single midnight prayer."

The emperor nodded and now looked at the nobles. There were many pious people among them. He felt sure that he would find the right person among them. But none of them spoke up either. "I know there are many among you who never miss your prayers no matter what happens," said Shah Jahan. "Please tell me which one of you is ready to lay the foundation stone? We're getting delayed." Still no one spoke. "Is there no one among you who has never missed his prayers to date?" asked Shah Jahan getting impatient.

"You mentioned midnight prayers, Jahan panah," said one of the nobles. "We may not have missed the usual prayers for a single day, but like the maulavis, we too have not been able to offer our midnight prayers daily. It is not an easy thing to do!"

Shah Jahan mopped his brow. He never thought that finding the right person would be so difficult! He turned his gaze from the maulavis and nobles to the common people. "What about the rest of you? Am I to believe that there is no one here - not a single person - who has been regular in offering his midnight prayers?" he asked. "If there is, please speak up now. I promise,

he shall lay the foundation stone of our royal mosque, whoever he might be. And I shall reward him, too."

But again everyone stood silent until one of the commoners said, "Why don't *you* lay the foundation stone, Jahan panah? Surely you must have been regular about midnight prayers?"

The emperor shook his head sadly. "No, I haven't," he said, "I guess very few kings can be that regular. I cannot lie about such a holy matter. Now, I really can't think how I should decide the matter. Have you any ideas?"

One of the maulavis came forward. "Jahan panah, it looks like no one among us can fulfil the condition set by you. That being so, I think you should lay the foundation stone since you are our emperor and the most important person in this kingdom."

"He's right," agreed the other maulavis. "Yes, Jahan panah, you're the fittest person to lay the stone," cried the nobles together. The crowd simply cheered. Shah Jahan looked relieved and smiled. "Very well, then, if that is what all of you feel, I shall do it."

The foundation stone was laid and the mosque was named Jami Masjid. It is the largest mosque in India today. Nearly 20,000 people can pray there at the same time. Popularly called the Juma Masjid, it has two minarets, each being 33m (108 ft) high and covers an area of 9,290 sq. m. It is one of the important landmarks of Delhi.

- By Swapna Dutta



Do you know?

Do you know that housewives can save up to 30 per cent of cooking gas or kerosene? Pressure cooking is one of the fastest and most economical ways of cooking. Experiments have shown fuel (kerosene or cooking gas) savings of 20 per cent on rice, 46 per cent on soaked gram dal and 41.5 per cent on meat, as compared to ordinary cooking. The savings in cooking time are equally high. To obtain further savings from a pressure cooker, use the separators to cook different items such as rice, vegetable and dal, all at the same time.

- Courtesy: PCRA

Science Fair

December born–Ramanujan

Srinivasa Ramanujan was born on December 22, 1887 in Erode in Tamilnadu. As a small child he used to shuttle between Kumbakonam, Kancheepuram and Madras where he attended primary schools. In the final primary school examination, he stood first in the district of Thanjavur. For the next six years he studied in the Town High School of Kumbakonam, where his mathematical genius began to sprout. His teachers thought he was a mathematical prodigy.

Ramanujan joined Kumbakonam Government College. But he had no interest in any subject other than pure mathematics. So in the final examination, he failed in English and his scholarship was cancelled. He had no means to continue his studies. In 1905, the 17-year old youth ran away from home and went to his grandmother's house in Madras and joined the Pachaiyappa's College. But there, too, he repeatedly failed except in mathematics. Ramanujan went back to Kumbakonam crest-fallen and frustrated.

For the next five years, Ramanujan pursued mathematics at home. His parents found a nine-year old bride for Ramanujan, who was now 21. He left for Madras to seek a job. He joined R.Ramachandra Rao, then Secretary of the Indian Mathematical Society, where he succeeded in getting his first paper published in its *Journal*. In 1912, he joined the Accounts Department of the Madras Port Trust under S. Narayana Iyer, who was treasurer of the Indian Mathematical Society. The Port Trust was then headed by Sir Francis Spring.

Narayana Iyer and Sir Francis wrote a 10-page letter to Professor G.H.Hardy of Cambridge University, enclosing Ramanujan's work in algebra, trigonometry and calculus. After going through the papers Hardy wrote: "A single look at them is enough to show that they could only be written down by a mathematician of the highest class."

Hardy's colleague, E.H.Neville, was giving 21 lectures on mathematics at Madras University. He met with Ramanujan, and called him to Cambridge. After overcoming stiff opposition at home, Ramanujan set sail and reached Cambridge on April 18, 1914. It was a historic day in the life of the young mathematical genius. He met with his benefactor, Prof. Hardy, who was to write later "Ramanujan was my discovery."

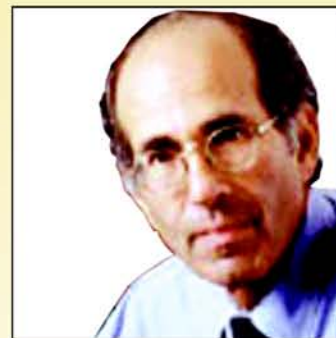
Between 1914 and 18, about 20 major papers by Ramanujan were published in outstanding journals. As a consequence of continuous hard work, Ramanujan fell ill. Realizing that he might not live long, Hardy began efforts to get the highest recognition for him. In 1917, he was elected to the London Mathematical Society. In 1918, he was named a Fellow of the Royal Society. He was then only 29. Ramanujan returned to India in 1919. The next two and a half years he lay ill, but he continued to work feverishly. On April 26, 1920, Ramanujan, "the greatest mathematician of his time", as Prof. Hardy, called him passed away into memory.



Nobel for noble work

Mention Nobel Awards, and one immediately thinks of the large prize money they will fetch for the recipients. More valuable will be the benefits which humanity accrues from the painstaking research/invention/discovery which duly gets recognised. Take the 2004 Nobel Award for Physiology and Medicine. How have the awardees, Richard Axel and Linda Buck, both the USA, served humanity?

They have made a great contribution to knowing more about man's system of the five sensory organs. They have discovered how man is able to recognize and remember 10,000 different smells or odours. They have, by using molecular techniques, found about 1,000 different genes which produce the same number of smell recognizing receptors located in the upper part of the nose. These receptors detect the odours which man inhales. Each receptor can detect a small number of odorant (smelling) substances. The receptor cell then sends the information via nerve processes directly to what are called "glomeruli" in a part of the brain called the olfactory (concerning smell) area. This in turn passes on the information to other parts of the brain. On receiving an odour, it activates a protein called G-protein. We are able to recognise the smell of a rose and remember it for years. How do we recall the smell of smoke for years together? Till Axel and Buck's studies revealed the origin, the sense of smell had remained a mystery.



- By Rosscothe Krishna Pillai

Science Quiz

- Who was the first Director General of the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) in India?
a. Swaminathan, b. Mashelkar, c. Bhabha, d. Bhatnagar.
- Which is the highest waterfall in the world?
a. Niagara Falls in Canada, b. Angel Falls in Venezuela, c. Khone Falls in Laos, d. Stanley Falls in Congo.
- Who made the first broadcast of human speech?
a. Marconi, b. Hetz, c. Fessenden, d. Braun.
- Name the first person who reached the South Pole.
a. Peary, b. Cook, c. Amundsen, d. Scott.

Answer: 1) d. Bhatnagar, 2) b. Angel Falls in Venezuela 3) c. Fessenden 4) c. Amundsen.

Raman on alcohol

C.V. Raman was visiting Europe. One day, at a party, he was offered an alcoholic drink. A strict teetotaler himself, Raman chuckled and remarked: "You can see the Raman effect on alcohol, but not the effect of alcohol on Raman."

Pneumonia

A British actor, in an interview to a New York reporter, claimed that he had attended both Oxford and Cambridge.

"Why did you leave Oxford?" enquired the reporter.

"Pneumonia, dear boy," explained the actor. "Because you caught it?" persisted the questioner. Pat came the reply: "No, because I couldn't spell it."



THE KING WHO WAS DUMB-FOUNDED

Once upon a time there was a king who possessed unlimited wealth—not in the form of gold and silver coins or precious stones, but in cattle, elephants, horses, donkeys and camels; also a retinue of personal attendants and servants. He was the lone master of all this wealth.

One day he ordered all his attendants and servants to assemble on a particular day and at an appointed hour. As he had not disclosed the purpose, they could not help whispering amongst themselves, with each one guessing something, some finding an explanation, and some others offering suggestions. However, they could not agree with one another.

The day dawned and everybody trooped into the courtyard of his residence. They waited for the king to arrive with bated breath. At last he came and without

any ado, he asked: “Has everybody assembled? I hope nobody has remained behind!”

Everybody looked at each other, without daring to confirm or deny.

The king took a sweeping glance at the assembly and said, “From your silence, I conclude that nobody is absent. Now, listen to me carefully. I want to ask you something and I want an answer from each one of you.”

One of the aged attendants stepped forward and said, “Sire, whatever you want to ask, please let us know, and we shall try to answer you to the best of our ability and knowledge.” Everybody else nodded in agreement.

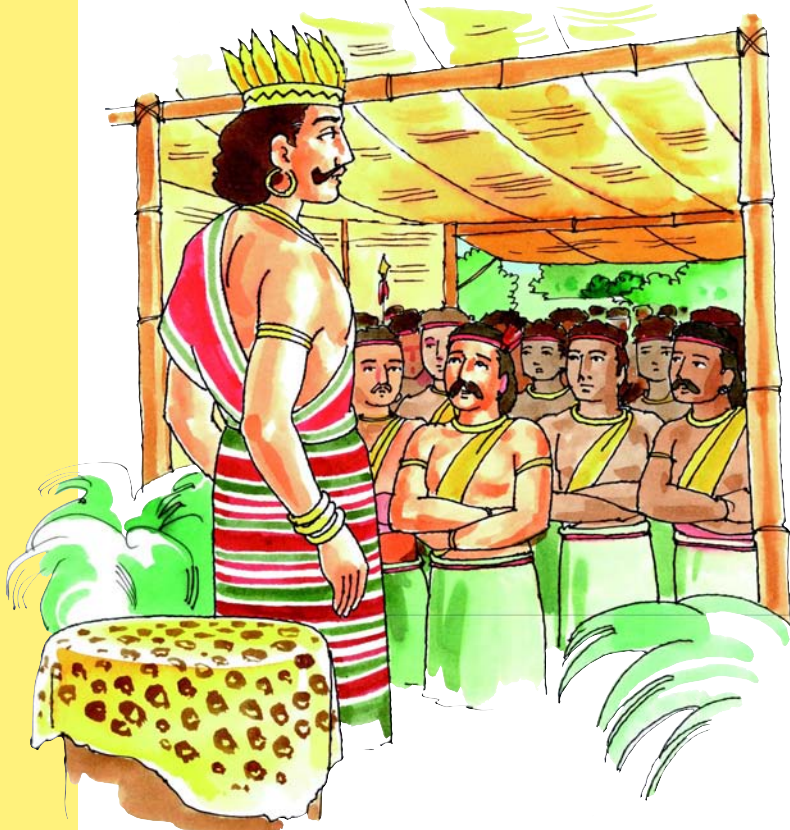
Now, the king did not waste any time. “I want you to tell me what is in my mind, whether I have any worry or anxiety! This is why I have summoned all of you.” He did not elaborate or explain. “You may take your turn, step forward and give me your answer.”

One by one, they all stood before the king, gave what each one thought was the correct answer, only to see the king shake his head in disagreement. Fortunately, his face did not reflect any particular emotion, and it was difficult to decide whether he was angry, disappointed, sad, or frustrated.

After everyone had had his turn, the king addressed them: “I am sorry, I can’t agree with any one of you. You may go back and attend to your respective work.”

The lone minister was watching the whole exercise from a corner of the portico facing the courtyard. The king now turned to him and ordered: “Find out a person who has knowledge about my mind. Bring to me such a person within one month. If you fail, you will lose your job!” After giving this peremptory order, the king went inside.

The minister stroked his chin with one hand and tapped his head with the other. He also went back home



and lay down staring at the ceiling. 'Where shall I go and search for a man who is privy to the king's thoughts?' This thought bothered him the whole day. I shall start the search tomorrow.' With this thought, he tried to get some sleep.

He got up early next morning and went out. He posed his problem to whoever he met on the way. He drew blank with everybody. Either they were ignorant or they did not want to suggest the name of anybody, fearing the wrath of the king. The minister's wanderings continued for several days and he knew there were not many days left for him to go to the king with someone who would be sharing his mind.

The minister began losing his appetite and sleep. He avoided eating and he would be seen sitting up in his bed lost in deep thoughts. His wife pleaded with him to eat, but he refused to touch a morsel. Their daughter saw his predicament and one day went up to him. "Father! What's worrying you? You look so miserable! Why are you not eating? Why are you not sleeping? Please tell me!"

The minister brushed her aside. One morning, he even refused to take a bath. His daughter could not brook it any longer. "If you don't take your bath or eat your food, mother and I have decided to go hungry!" she posed a threat. "Otherwise, you must tell me what is worrying you. Who knows, I may be able to find a solution!"

The minister sat up. This was the first time anybody was offering to find a solution to a problem that had been worrying him for days and weeks. He then told her of the king's order and how he had failed to locate anyone who would know the king's mind. "How many days are now left, father?" the girl asked him.

"Maybe another day or two," replied the minister.

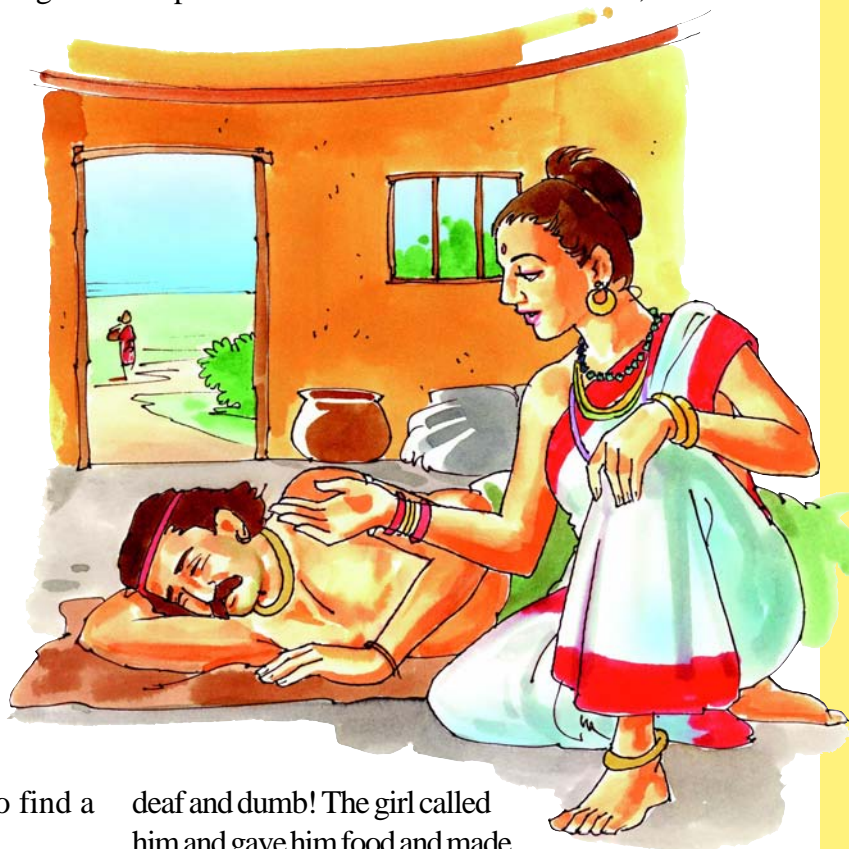
"Tell me the exact date, and I shall bring the man well in time," said his daughter with great confidence. "Now, please go and take your bath and join us to eat." The girl forced him to get up and she nearly pushed him out of the room.

While eating, the minister told his daughter, "I've to

present myself before the king the day after tomorrow. When will you bring the man?" he queried with some anxiety.

"Day after tomorrow. Don't worry, father," said the girl with certainty. "I'll find the man before that and he'll accompany you the day after tomorrow!"

The girl did not go anywhere! She thought of the boy who took care of their sheep and goats. The young shepherd had three rams of his own. Now, he was both



deaf and dumb! The girl called him and gave him food and made him understand that he was to go with her father to meet the king. He nodded his head.

The girl kept her father in suspense till the day he had to go to the king. When the shepherd was brought to the minister, he was both surprised and shocked. "But he is deaf and dumb, my dear!" the minister protested.

"Father, you take him along, without any worry," his daughter assured him, "he'll know what the king has in his mind!"

The minister had a lot of faith in his daughter, so he agreed to take the shepherd along with him. "You dumb fellow, you come along." The two left for the palace.

A crowd had gathered to watch the king, the minister,

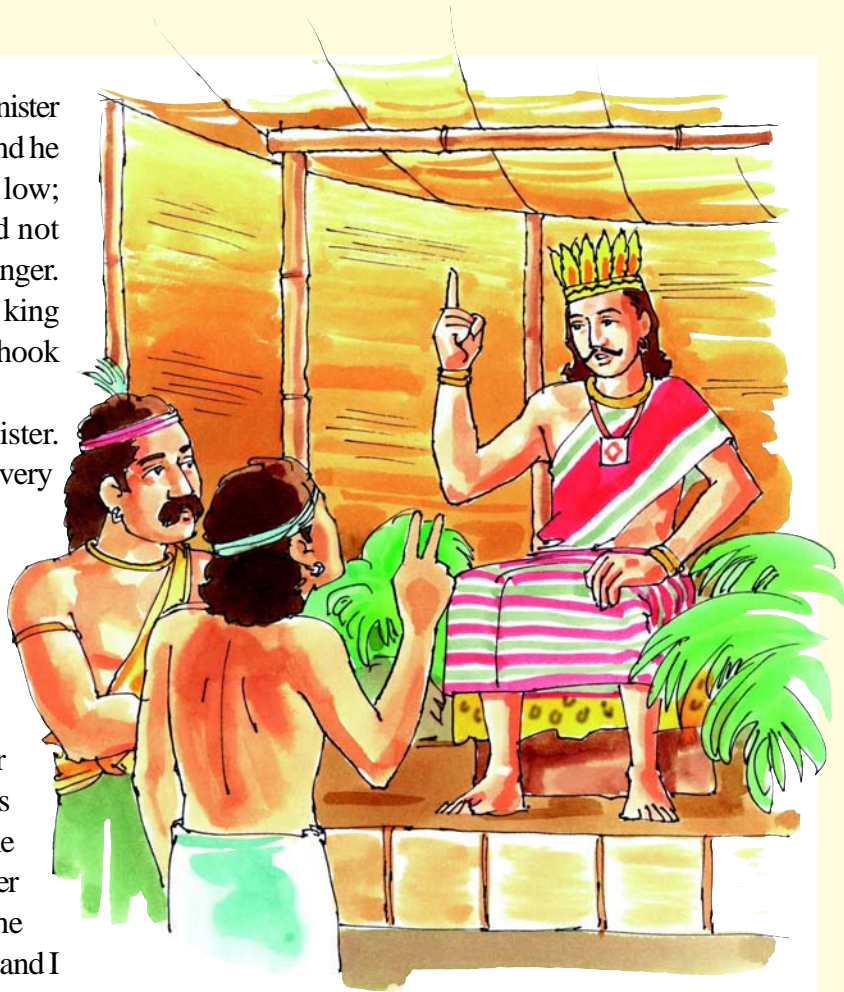
and the person who would answer the king. As the minister approached the place, word was sent to the king and he came and sat on his seat. The minister first bowed low; the shepherd boy also bowed low. The king did not speak; he merely raised his hand and showed one finger. The boy responded by putting up two fingers. The king smiled and showed three fingers. The shepherd shook his head and put up two fingers again.

The king was all smiles. He turned to the minister. "You brought an excellent person. He answered me very correctly. I must compliment you, Minister!"

"Thank you, Sire" said the minister, once again bowing low. "If you don't mind, will you please explain to me and to the people gathered here what you asked him and what he told him."

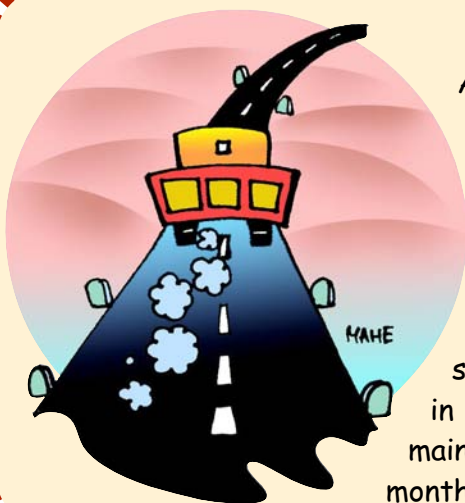
"It was very simple, Minister," said the king. "When I showed one finger, I was asking him whether I alone am the master here. And he put out two fingers meaning I am not alone and the other was the supreme being. When I showed three fingers to find out whether anyone else also had powers over the kingdom, he raised two fingers again, confirming that only God and I have all the authority over the kingdom! So, you see, he correctly understood what I had in my mind!"

The king sent away the minister and the shepherd with separate pouches of coins. After reaching home, the minister, with the help of his daughter, asked the boy how he knew what was in the king's mind. The dumb fellow made them understand that the king had asked



him whether he would sell one of his rams, and he answered that he was willing to part with even two rams as he was the king, but when the king asked him whether he could buy all his three rams, he shook his head violently and said he would sell only two rams!

The minister and his daughter could not suppress their laughter.



Why do vehicles emit smoke?

A study was conducted on a fleet which had a programme of rectifying smoking vehicles through maintenance. Injectors were found to be defective in 60 per cent of the cases. Defective fuel injection pumps were responsible for smoke in 39 per cent of the cases and poor engine compression was noticed in 21 per cent of the cases. These are the three principal contributors to smoke. The maintenance of the fuel injection system and top engine overhaul on schedule will eliminate smoke in all vehicles. For a typical operator, the cost of repairs and maintenance will be recovered in a few days and at worst within six months, due to reduced diesel consumption. - COURTESY:PCRA

CHANDAMAMA

PRESENTS

KALEIDOSCOPE

MYSTERY MISCHIEF

"Wow! This place is beautiful!" Ekta and her family had gone to Ramoji Film City for their holidays.

In the hotel, they asked for a special room. The Manager took them to the sixth floor. A door had the board: 'Welcome to the Dragon'. The Manager said it was a Chinese room. It had Chinese paintings and dragons all over.

Later Ekta went to see the clubhouse where she had a surprise. She ran into her friend Tulsi. The two had a good time in the swimming pool. In the evening they went to look up the library in the clubhouse. There was a new man in charge whom they hadn't seen earlier. He helped them to select the books they liked and told them there was a free room available upstairs if they wanted to stay and read for sometime.

Ekta and Tulsi sat by the window, reading their books. They suddenly heard the man's voice. He was telling someone, "I've caught them! Come to the party and you can arrest them."

At night there was to be a party for Ganesh Chaturthi. As they were coming down, a man said, "You're under arrest!" Suddenly Tulsi shouted "Uncle, help us!" It was Tulsi's uncle, a Police Officer. They were amazed to see him speak to the man in the library as if he was a friend.

The man apologized to them. He said there were two thieves roaming in the Film City. They were said to be two men, disguised as women and with some children. When the Manager came to know about this, he had called Tulsi's uncle to help him find the thieves. As Ekta's mother and grandmother were two women and Ekta, Tulsi and Ekta's sister were children, the man had taken them to be the thieves!



S. Sravanthi (12), Hyderabad

THE FURNITURE FIGHT

The hand of the clock
 Pinched the foot of the cot
 So, the foot of the cot
 Kicked the seat of the chair
 So, the seat of the chair
 Sat on the head of the table
 So, the head of the table
 Bit the leg of the desk
 So the leg of the desk
 Twisted the arm of the sofa
 So the arm of the sofa
 Slapped the face of the clock
 And they pinched and pinched
 And they banged and knocked
 And they ripped and flipped
 And they rolled and rocked
 And the poor drawer
 Got a couple of socks
 There was sawdust and springs
 When I turned on the light
 After that horrible furniture fight
 That's how all the furniture got broke!



Nivedita N. Patil (9), Pune

THE ADVENTURES OF **G-man**



**THE BIG THIRST
PART - I**

POWER SUPPLY FOR



TERROLENE

THE MASTER OF DARKNESS

Ruth and powerful Terrolems controls a vast empire of crime and terror. Masquerading as a law-abiding citizen, he kidnaps children and absorbs their vital energy to feed his obsession - eternal youth.

Terrolems's smoking pipe can release gases that can knock out an adversary. The tip of his pipe holds an antidote, thus leaving him unaffected.

T-TOWER...
Terrolems's headquarters. It conceals a hi-tech armory, nuclear, chemical and biological warfare labs, torture chambers, and dark dungeons deep below.

Terrolems commands a huge army of trained terrorists, bodyguards and robbers. Armed with lethal weapons of death, they stand ready to fulfill Terrolems's sinister desires.

Terrolems markets drugs and adulterated food to fund his wicked schemes.

Terrolems's clothes are made from Steelton - a light fabric woven from strands of steel and cotton. Grease-resistant, even in a nuclear explosion.

The cane's head holds a small screen displaying images from across his empire.

Very few have seen Terrolems's scumme-like unborn half-brother. None have lived to tell the tale.

For a quick getaway, Terrolems has powerful jets built into his shoes.

POWER SUPPLY FOR



SURYARAJ

The Indian Army's 4th regiment fought the last battle that day.
Driving straight into an enemy ambush high up in the Himalayas.

Only Major Suryaraj survives the ambush.

alone.

wounded,

weary

and very cold.

Armed with an emergency supply of Parle-O and a strong will to live,

he now fights a lone war.

the brutal elements.

Two weeks later,

Suryaraj runs out of supplies.

and welcome.

Waiting to strike from the mountainous mountains.

When
a wandering
into mountain
spies him.

The next morning
the next day to
an abandoned
spot.

POWER SUPPLY FOR



the alien who possesses a
sermon of taste on
Major thuyana)

Is this the one the
prophecies speak of?

Is his soul pure?

Is his mind tough?

Is he the answer to
the earth's cry for help?

Is he the one to take on the great task?

Can he fight
for the name
of good?

Apparently
he could.

And first, he had to be transformed into

POWER SUPPLY FOR





The destroyer of evil.

This is the expertise that the alien guardians of the earth sought.

The single force to undo the harm that greed, hate, cruelty and arrogance have wreaked on gentle Mother Earth.

The Orb

Finally the orb's decade-old quest ends. A new purpose takes its place. To aid, guide and encourage IS men in his battle against evil.

POWER SUPPLY FOR



For more information visit www.parle.com



his power to kill.

There are three levels of the beam:

Blue beam	- strong
Yellow beam	- intense
Red beam	- extreme

The G-Band alerts G-man about crimes across the world. With data feed from his extraterrestrial eyes the orb, and the alien satellites orbiting the earth.



Suryasej has to be in constant contact with his trailer home, which is really is a small spacecraft in disguise. This vehicle is capable of receiving and transmitting signals.

G-man gets his powers from special formula Parle-G biscuits.



When he is not fighting crime, G-man lives as Major Suryasej - a physical training instructor in a school. He is loved and respected by his students.

POWER SUPPLY FOR



Std 5th

8 am

Science

What are the three states of water?

Water

Steam

Ice

At this very moment, deep inside the earth, chemistry as we know it is being challenged.

High pressures...

Molten rock...

And the fossilized remains of an alien being...

These three together act on the water table...

And create a fourth state of water...

An unstable combination of ice, water, steam and alien protoplasm.

What's the big deal? It's still just water, most would say...

But then most people take their water for granted...

Until today.

POWER SUPPLY FOR





A seemingly inconsequential incident...



Which has poisoned the earth's entire water reserve.



POWER SUPPLY FOR



The unstable aqueous element is somehow spreading unchecked.



Every living creature is affected.



The Big Thirst

THE BIG THIRST

POWER SUPPLY FOR



Water pipes which carried thirst-quenching life into the city...



Now bring in death.



Symptoms include:
Epileptic fits. Erratic heartbeat.
Stomach cramps. Vomiting. Fever.
Diarrhoea. Profuse sweating.

POWER SUPPLY FOR



Death seems to be
the only respite.



Major Suryaraj, surveys the situation.



And
I was wondering
why nobody came
to play football today.
Hmm




Suryaraj!
Glad you came.
We need all the help
we can get here.

Sorry teacher.
I'm needed
somewhere else.



If I may have a
word
in private, Major?







The water across the world seems to be contaminated by any known body.

The Orb briefs Major Suryaraj on the situation.

Is it a bacterium?
Or a parasite?
Or is it...
Nuclear waste?




We don't know yet. I'm still analysing the samples we've received from across the world.




The city water tank seems to be the nearest source of infection.

Then that's where I'll start my investigation.



Can G-men save the world from this water crisis?
Find out in these X-tiss ue.



Keep me posted on those tests.

Customer : I like the material and design on this shirt. But the colour is too dark.

Salesman : After one wash, you'll like the colour.



Prethi Narayan (12), Chennai

1st lunatic : I'm going to make a gift of Taj Mahal to my wife on our wedding anniversary.

2nd lunatic : No, you can't do that.

1st lunatic : Why?

2nd lunatic : Because I'm not going to sell it.



Santosh (13), Bangalore



Doctor : Get ready for the operation.

Patient : But you said it would be for tomorrow.

Doctor : Today it's a trial.

Kanchana (11), Chennai

Two doctors, on seeing a man limping, exchanged notes.

Cardiologist : I'm afraid he has a heart problem.

Orthopaedist : No, he has some problem with his bones.

On overhearing the conversation, the man said : I've a problem with my slippers.



K. Prafullitha Sri (10), Jaggaiahpet

Customer :
Waiter!
Waiter!
There's a fly in my soup!

Waiter :
Don't worry, sir.
The spider in the butter will catch it.



Ankita Bhat (11), Mumbai

Meera : Do you know, my father is a boxer and with one punch he can break your teeth?

Mohan : Oh! That's nothing. My mummy can pull out your teeth without any difficulty.

Meera : Is your Mummy a boxer?

Mohan : No, she is a dentist.



Saira Alam (13), Cuttack

CHRISTMAS CROSSWORD

CLUES :

1. Abbreviated form of Christmas.
2. This represents your good wishes to another.
3. Song of joy heard during Christmas.
4. His birthday is celebrated on December 25.
5. Christ was born in such a place.
6. The three wise men saw baby Jesus lying in a ____.
7. Prayer held on Christmas eve.
8. You cut this on your birthday, too!
9. Part of the decoration on a Christmas tree.
10. He is called Rudolph.
11. Santa Claus gains entry into houses through this.
12. Children expect him to bring gifts.

C	M	A	N	G	E	R	U	H	L
S	K	N	M	C	R	W	C	K	O
T	L	I	X	P	E	R	P	D	R
A	I	S	C	H	I	M	N	E	Y
R	T	A	S	B	N	K	X	F	L
M	G	S	L	C	D	P	M	V	O
P	A	U	C	A	E	K	A	C	R
M	I	S	H	R	E	F	S	T	A
L	K	E	B	D	R	K	D	V	C
Y	B	J	H	S	A	T	N	A	S

ERRATA

The Stories *How Mittu became a hero* and *Lesson from a Dream*, appearing in the Children's Special pages of the November 2004 issue were written by P. Karthikeya of Vijayawada. We regret having printed a wrong photograph along with the stories.



— Editor

SANTA IN RIDDLES



1. What do cats call Father Christmas?
2. Why does Santa Claus go down the chimney on Christmas eve?
3. What is Santa's favourite animal?
4. What is Santa's favourite vehicle?
5. What do you call people who are afraid of Santa Claus?
6. Why did Santa spell the word 'Noel' as 'N-O-E'?

Shirley D'Cruz (12), Mumbai

- Riddles
1. Santa Claws
 2. Because it scots
 3. The rein-dear
 4. The reindeer -
 5. Claustro-phobic
 6. Because the angel Gabriel had said, "no 'L'."

S	V	N	T	A	T	A	H	F	R	Y
L	K	E	B	G	N	K	D	V	A	C
M	I	S	H	N	E	F	A	T	A	V
P	A	U	C	A	E	K	A	C	R	
M	O	S	L	C	D	P	M	V	O	
M	T	A	S	B	N	K	X	F	L	
A	I	S	C	H	I	M	N	E	Y	
T	L	I	X	P	E	R	P	D	R	
S	K	N	M	C	R	W	C	K	O	
C	M	A	N	G	E	R	U	H	L	

Christmascrossword

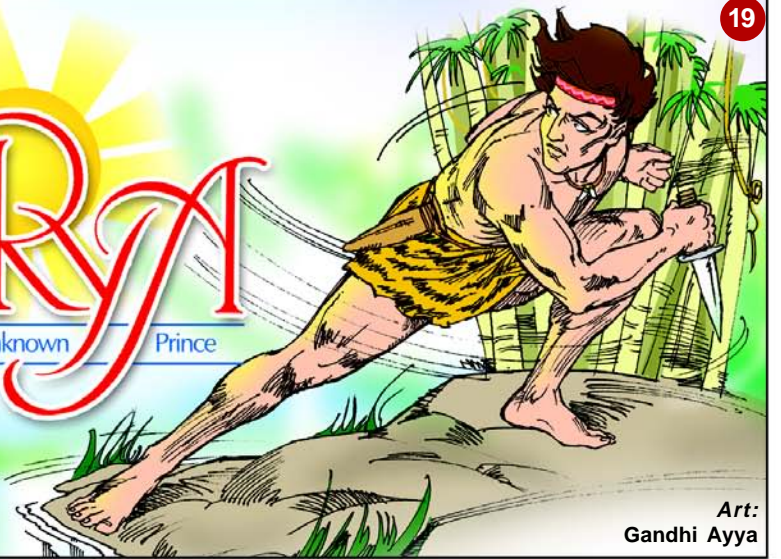
Answers :

The usurper to the Shantipur throne, on the pretext of hunting, searches the forest for rebel camps. He and his men are attacked by animals. On getting a command from a handsome youth, the animals go back. As Vir Singh retreats, he wonders who the youth is. Meanwhile a golden idol is unearthed in Jainagar. Chieftain Sukhdev orders a temple to be constructed.

ARYA

The Mystery of the Unknown Prince

19



Art:
Gandhi Ayya

Chieftain Sukhdev is taking a stroll in his garden. A bodyguard approaches him.





Soldiers of Shantipur surround the palace of Chieftain Sukhdev.



Shall we attack the palace, General?

You go forward and line up in front of the palace. If you meet with resistance, then launch an attack.



Jabar Singh and one captain proceed to the palace.



One of the Chieftain's guards sees soldiers approaching the palace.



Sire, one of our men has seen soldiers encircling the palace.

Let them. We won't offer any resistance.



Another guard comes in.

Someone looking like an army chief is heading for the palace.

Must be Jabar Singh. Let him in.



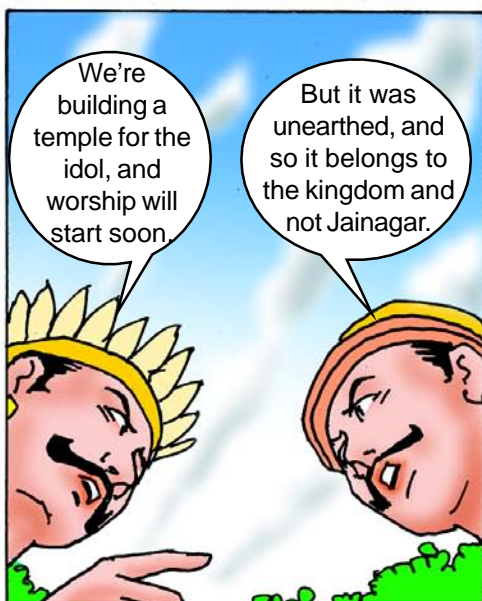
I'm General Jabar Singh from Shantipur. I've come for the golden idol.

I had told your messenger that we cannot part with it.



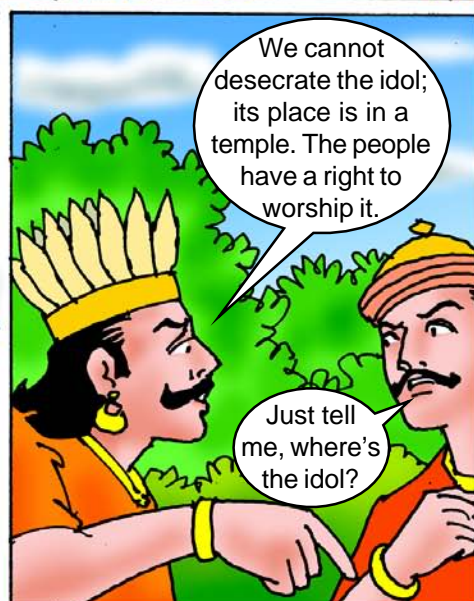
We're building a temple for the idol, and worship will start soon.

But it was unearthed, and so it belongs to the kingdom and not Jainagar.

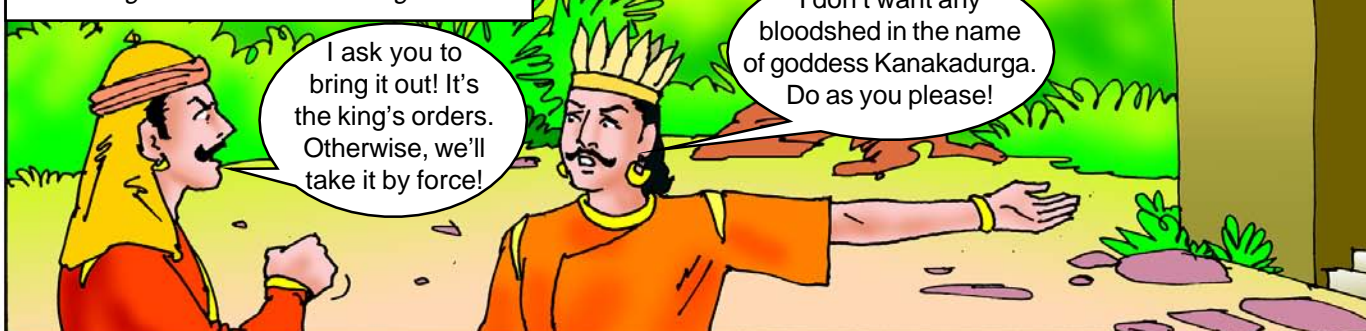


We cannot desecrate the idol; its place is in a temple. The people have a right to worship it.

Just tell me, where's the idol?



Jabar Singh tries to throw his weight around.



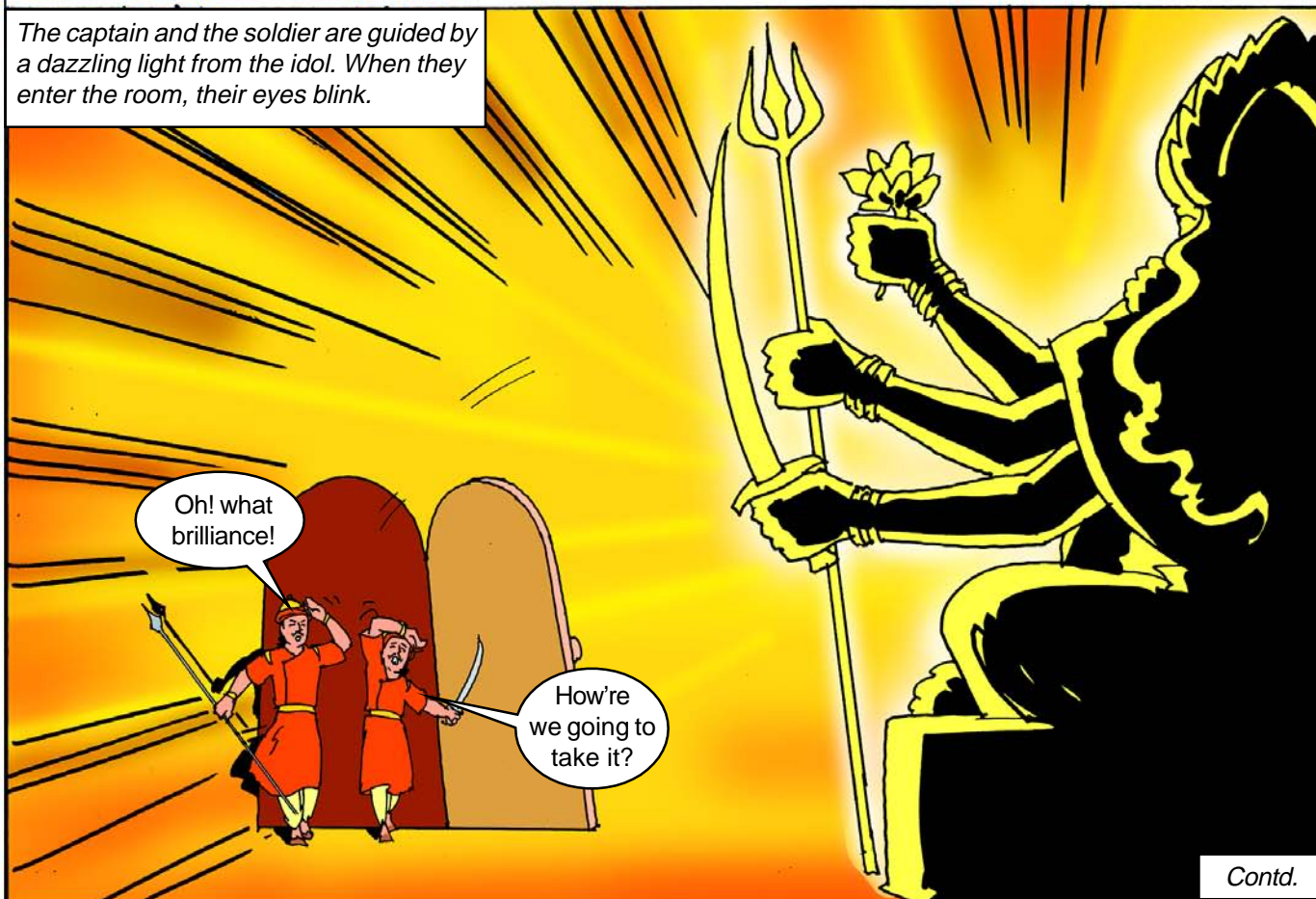
Jabar Singh signals to the captain.



The captain and a soldier enter the palace to search for the idol.



The captain and the soldier are guided by a dazzling light from the idol. When they enter the room, their eyes blink.



Contd.



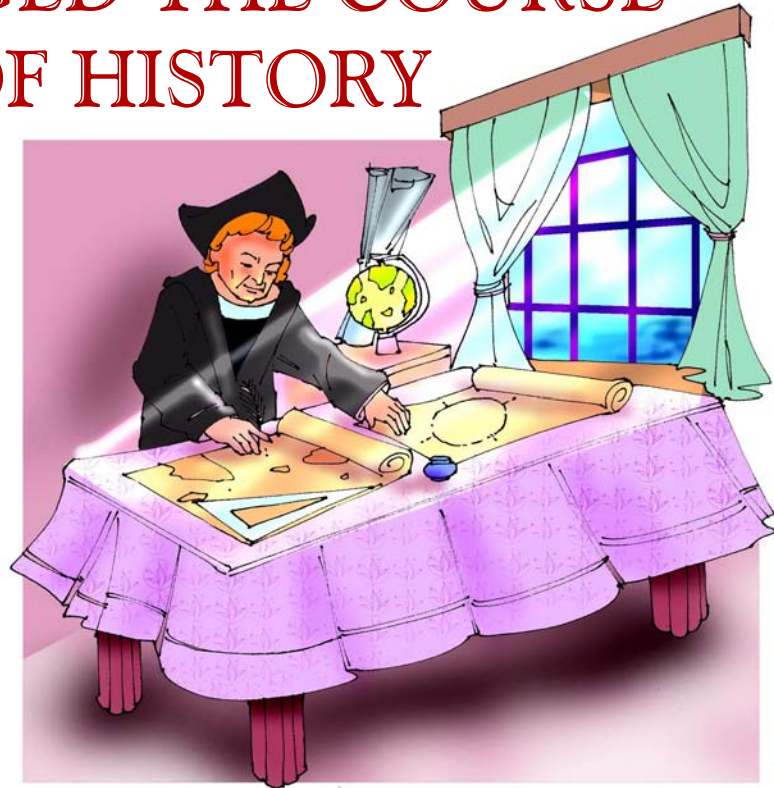
THE MARINER WHO CHANGED THE COURSE OF HISTORY

There once lived, more than 500 years ago, a brave and clever mariner called Christopher Columbus. He was born in 1451 to a humble family of weavers in the Italian city of Genoa lying between the mountains and the sea. At an early age he helped his father in his trade. But when he turned 14, he is said to have gone to sea for the first time. The salt air and the sailing ships simply fascinated the boy. He soon got himself some work aboard merchant vessels.

Columbus did not have any formal education; his career in the sea for almost nine years gave him valuable experience and knowledge. Once when his ship sunk, the courageous young man is said to have swam ashore. He gradually learned the art of navigation, not from books but from practice. He developed a profound understanding of the weather and knew how to read signs of the winds. He often accurately predicted storms. He mastered reading of the charts and making complex calculations relating to time, speed and distance that are essential for good and safe sailing.

Whenever he could steal some time from work, he on his own studied subjects like geography, astronomy and mathematics. He even read with great interest the tales of adventure left by ancient travellers. He believed that the earth was round. He was indeed right! But very few people in those olden days believed it. Not before long, young Christopher Columbus began to ponder, dream and scheme. For he thought that if the world was really a sphere, then men could reach the Orient by going west from Europe as well as by going east, because a ship could sail round the world either way.

He had now chalked out an ambitious plan. He had a dream to visit the great rich and fabulous land of India, which he called the Indies. But who would help him carry out his wish? For many long years he patiently tried to persuade the monarchs of several countries—Portugal,



England and France—to sponsor the project. As he himself recollected later, “Eight years I was torn with disputes, and in a word, my proposition was a thing for mockery.”

After much initial hesitation, the King and the Queen of Spain at last consented to assist him. On Friday, August 3, 1492, just before daybreak three little ships sailed away from the Spanish port of Palos. The flagship with Admiral Columbus on it was called *Santa Maria*, meaning Holy Mary. The other two vessels were named *Pinta* and *Nina*. Merely three days had passed by when for no apparent reason *Pinta*’s rudder suddenly broke. It was found that two of the sailors had purposely done the damage, hoping to make Columbus turn back. For many of them were too terrified to proceed farther. The fleet had to make a stopover at some islands for several weeks before the rudder was set right.

The great obstacles that Columbus really faced were his crew’s beliefs and superstitions. Many still thought that the earth was flat and there was every danger that at any moment they might all just tumble over its edge! They



the booby and takes it away. The booby moves slowly and seems stupid, hence its name meaning a fool. Columbus always cheered his men up as best as he could and gave them hope.

On the third day a small branch covered with berries came floating by. Are they nearing land?

That night the great mariner saw a light shining in the distance. It looked like the light of a candle

imagined that beyond lay unknown seas and regions of perpetual darkness. These were full of horrible monsters and there were places where the water was boiling and there were endless whirlpools. They grew more and more restless as days and months passed without the sight of any land. However, their leader with all his tact and patience managed to pacify his sailors and inspired confidence in them.

One evening at twilight there came an excited shout from the masthead of one of the ships. "Tierra! Tierra!" (Land! Land!) As the news spread, everyone on all the three vessels fell on their knees and looking up at the sky thanked God for bringing them safely to their journey's end. The ship's direction was changed towards the distant land and all hopefully waited for the next morning. At the first light of the day the sailors stood on the deck and looked on ahead straining their eyes. Alas, they saw no land! What they had been seeing was merely clouds on the horizon which at sunset looked like solid mass. It was a phenomenon that often occurred in mid-seas.

Columbus called his men and asked them to bear with him for three more days. He even told them to keep a good look-out. For the person who should first sight land will receive, besides the promised reward from the King of Spain, a silken jacket from him.

Sometimes there was no wind and the ships hardly moved. The sea was calm that the sailors were able to swim by the side of the ships. They saw several kinds of birds. One was the man-of-war bird, another booby and some little ones called sandpipers. When the man-of-war bird sees a booby that has caught a fish, he attacks

rising and falling. The Admiral was now certain that land was not far. He asked his sailors to be vigilant. Finally, in the wee hours of the morning of October 12, 1492 Columbus had his first landfall. For gleaming in the moonlight there lay a beautiful little island.

Along with the captains of the three ships Columbus rowed ashore in a boat, fixed a tall pole on the sandy-beach and raised the royal flag of Spain. He named the island San Salvador, meaning Holy Saviour. All this while, the local natives were peering inquisitively hiding behind some bushes. They had never seen white men before. They thought that the Admiral and his sailors had come from heaven. This is how Columbus later described them:

"The people of the islands go about quite naked. They have handsome bodies and very good faces. Their hair is short and coarse, almost like the hair of a horse's tail. Some paint themselves white, some red; some paint the whole body, some only around the eyes, others only on the nose. They knew nothing of weapons, for I showed them swords and they took them by the blades and cut themselves. ..."

Columbus observed that some of them had a piece of gold fastened in a hole in their nose. He learnt from them by sign language that to the south there lived a certain king who had great cups full of gold. Columbus was now sure that he had reached the Indies on the eastern side of Asia. He called the natives Indians and the group of islands he discovered as West Indies. But he was unaware that the island he had reached was not part of Asia but near to another great continent which came to be known as America.

He continued to look for the king with cups full of gold, but instead he discovered many more islands where he did not find the gold he had dreamt of. He found instead gums, spices and saw many strange things. The natives used cotton nets as beds which they called “hamacas” hung between two posts like modern hammocks. They made bread out of radish-like roots called yams which they roasted and ate. They rolled up the dried leaves of a particular plant. Then lighting one end they put the other in their mouths. After that they continued exhaling and puffing out the smoke. Columbus and his men were the first white men to see tobacco in use.

While thus cruising among the islands, one of the ships, the *Pinta*, suddenly deserted the other two and disappeared. Then one night a strong current carried the flagship *Santa Maria* on to a coral reef. However hard they tried, the ship could not be hauled into the water. Now only one vessel, the *Nina*, was at their disposal. But it could not take all the men on board. So Columbus was compelled to leave behind some of his sailors on the island. He built a tower and a fort for them. He then left for home taking with him some of the natives to show to the King and Queen of Spain.

Some days later they were caught in a terrible storm. The wind seemed to lift the ship up in the air and there were rain and lightning all around them. Their vessel was in grave danger of being dashed to pieces. Columbus feared that soon they would all be drowned and no one would ever know of his adventure and discoveries. So he wrote the story of his voyage on a sheet of parchment, a sheep skin specially prepared for writing. He requested anyone who might find it to kindly deliver it to the King and Queen of Spain. Then the parchment was rolled in cloth which was then soaked in wax to make it waterproof and fastened tightly. Finally it was put inside a wooden barrel and thrown into the sea.

Luckily the bad weather did not last long. Christopher Columbus and his sailors at last reached the Spanish port of Palos which they had left a year ago.

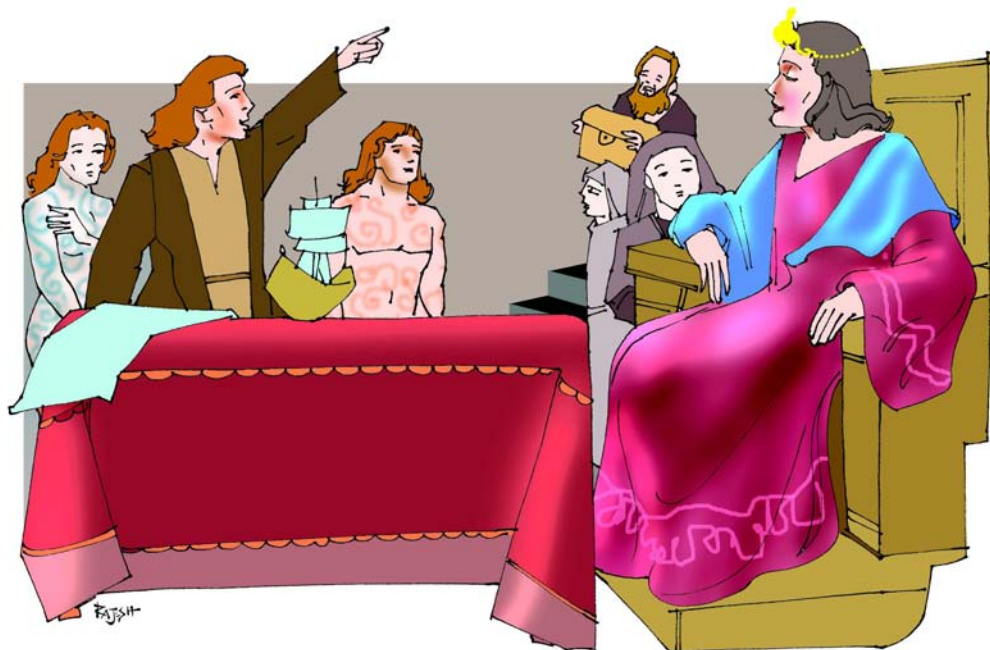
To their surprise the ship which had deserted them was already there before them.

There were great rejoicings at his return. The King and the Queen sent for him and listened to the story of his adventures. He was treated with great honour and he earned the title of “Admiral of the Ocean Sea”. When he thought of making another voyage, people who once made fun of him were eager to go with him. So Columbus did make not one but three more voyages to these new lands. He had many more adventures and made many more discoveries. Unfortunately some of the Spaniards were jealous of him and treated him not too kindly. They spread false rumours about him which reached the ears of the royal court. One day an iron chain was put on him and he was sent home a prisoner. He was, of course, set free when the king and queen realised that all this was the doings of some wicked men. They felt really sorry for the great mariner who had been treated so badly and humiliated.

Soon after Columbus returned from his last voyage he died on May 20, 1506, still under the illusion of having found the great and ancient land of India. He never reached the Indies of his dream but led the way to a new continent, so big and wonderful that people then spoke of it as the “New World”. Yet since he thought that he had reached the Indies, the natives of America are still known as Indians.

Christopher Columbus was one of the greatest mariners. His explorations and discoveries have indeed changed the course of history.

- By A.K.D.



PRIZE-WINNING 'REACTION'

(Compare with the story that appeared in the respective month)



The three runners (July 2004)

Vijay replied, "Doctor's orders. He had advised me to run a mile every day." "Oh, yes?" sneered the policemen. "Then, why didn't you stop when you saw us? And don't say you didn't see us; we're sure you did."

"Yes, I did see you," replied Vijay. "Then, why didn't you stop?" asked the policemen.

Vijay said, "I thought you also had been asked by your doctor to run!" The policemen knew they had been outwitted. They walked away.

Next day, when Vijay met Manohar, the latter asked him, "Why did you run away when you had the license?" Vijay replied, "Fool! I ran to save you."

"To save me?" asked Manohar.

"Yes," replied Vijay. "If I hadn't run, the police would have checked you and when you wouldn't have produced it, the police would have arrested you. But, as I ran, the police thought I was the one who didn't have the permit. They ran after me and you got a chance to get away!"

Manohar thanked his friend.

- Aamir Arfin (13), Rourkela

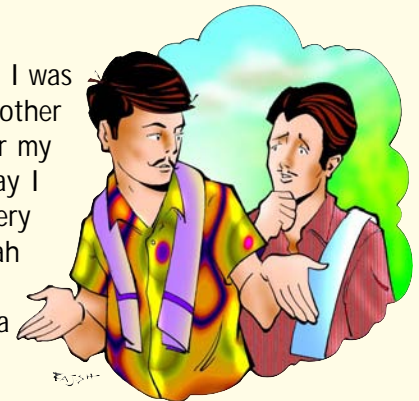


Who was smart? (August 2004)

"On the first day I kept the keys under my pillow and the thieves took them when I was fast asleep. The second day I kept the keys under the same pillow, but slept in another room. I kept awake all night to catch the robbers when they would search under my pillow. But the clever robbers got the key from under my old pillow! The third day I slept in yet another room, this time keeping the key under the pillow of the very bed I slept. I waited all night to catch the thief, but next day I found my almirah open and my money looted!"

"How did they open the almirah without the keys?" asked Krishnakumar in a surprised tone.

"Well, this time I forgot to lock the almirah!" replied Ramkumar with a grin.



- Manoj Thomas (14), Trivandrum



The loyal cook (September 2004)

Shankar remained speechless for a moment. Then he replied, "Your Majesty, I shall cook for your brother-in-law. But I won't accept the hundred silver coins which you wish to give me as extra wage."

Both the king and the queen looked puzzled.

The royal cook went on, "I take pride in cooking exclusively for you. And it's my loyalty to you that I agree to cook for somebody else to meet your wish. As you yourself have permitted me, I don't need to be paid extra for it. Your kindness and favour is all that I desire."

The king was touched by his cook's words. He retained Shankar in his service.

- Madhurima Ganguly (10), Santragachi, Howrah



READ AND REACT

A NOVEL CONTEST FOR READERS

Cash prize of Rs. 250 for the best entry

Read the story below:

A well-known scholar was once crossing a river by boat. He was the lone passenger. The boatman said, "Sir, it might take quite some time to reach the opposite side. Why not we pass our time pleasantly?"

"Yes, why not?" responded the scholar, smilingly.

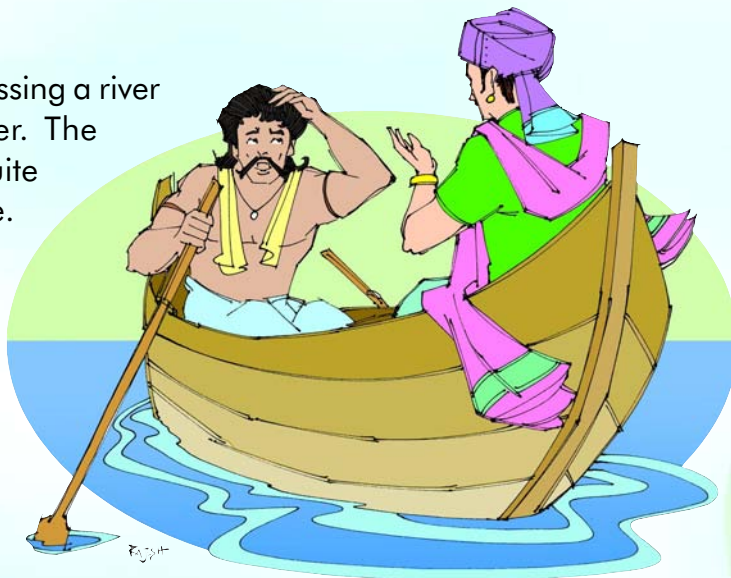
"To make our conversation interesting," suggested the boatman, "let's agree that if you fail to answer my question, you'll pay me two rupees. And if I fail, I'll pay you one rupee, for, I'm poor and illiterate."

"Very well," said the scholar, "now you can ask me the first question."

The boatman scratched his head. "Tell me, sir, which bird has a hundred wings and flies by night and sleeps by day?"

- ◆ Can you imagine what answer the scholar would have given?
- ◆ How was the deal settled?

Write down your answer in not more than 150 words, give a title to your entry, and mail it to us along with the coupon below in an envelope marked "Read and React".



CLOSING DATE : December 31, 2004

Name -----Age-----Date of birth-----

School-----Class-----

Home address-----

-----PIN code-----

Parent's signature

Participant's signature

CHANDAMAMA INDIA LIMITED

82 Defence Officers Colony, Ekkatuthangal, Chennai - 600 097.



The kids were boasting about their respective fathers.

"My daddy bathes twice a week," said Mahesh.

"That's nothing," said Rohan. "My daddy bathes three times a week."

"Oh yeah," said Pramila, not wishing to be out-dad-died.

"My daddy keeps himself so clean he never has to take a bath."



Laugh till you drop!

Lady (dials 100): Help! Please come to my house at once!

Policeman: What's the trouble, Ma'am?

Lady: That dreadful new postman is sitting up on a tree in front of my garden teasing my dog.



~~~~~

**John**: How did you break your arm?

**Michael**: I followed my doctor's prescription.

**John**: How could you break your arm doing that?

**Michael**: It flew out of the window and I followed it.



~~~~~

Mukesh: Would you like to come to my party on Saturday?

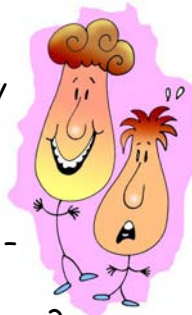
Akshay: Yes, I'd love to. What's the address?

Mukesh: Number four, New Street - just ring the bell with your elbow.

Akshay: Why can't I ring with my finger?

Mukesh: You're not coming empty-handed, are you?

Akshay: !!!!!!!



Dushtu Dattu

One morning, the household is in chaos. Father goes for his bath. Suddenly the taps go dry...





Mulla Nasruddin was in high spirits. Not his wife. He did not fail to notice it. The sulk on her face was plastered all over, casting its shadow all around.

"I can't understand you. Here I am, invited to dinner at the royal court. Only those whom the Caliph holds in high regard get the invitation. Do you get the message, my dear?" he showed his annoyance.

"You have told it all," she squeaked.

"What do you mean?"

"You made it clear that the Caliph holds you in high respect, not me. You got the invitation, not me. So where is room for me to feel happy?" she scowled.

Nasruddin thought it unfair. He expected her to bask in his glory. His glory should be hers, too, he thought. But she seemed totally unwilling to share his joy. No wife, in her senses, would behave in such a manner. Or so he thought. He decided to knock some sense into her head. He surveyed her from head to foot. He now noticed, that the sulk on her face was more pronounced.

"Do you realise that a sulk is masking your face? Take it off, right away. For the sulk reminds me of an ugly toad," he ticked her off for being such a sourpuss.

"Don't you know that I was a toad and will always remain a toad? I had put on a beautiful face to attract you. Now that I can show my true face, I don't need to wear the mask of beauty," she replied firmly.

"You have too many words in your tongue. And each word has enough poison in it to kill a camel," he raised his voice.

"Yet not enough to give my man even a mild shock,"

she was not one to let Nasruddin have the last word in an argument.

"Allah be pleased!" he sighed.

"Leave Allah well alone," her voice reached a high pitch.

Before he could reply, she stomped out of his presence.

It was not the first time he had quarrelled with his wife. So this tiff with her did not worry him.

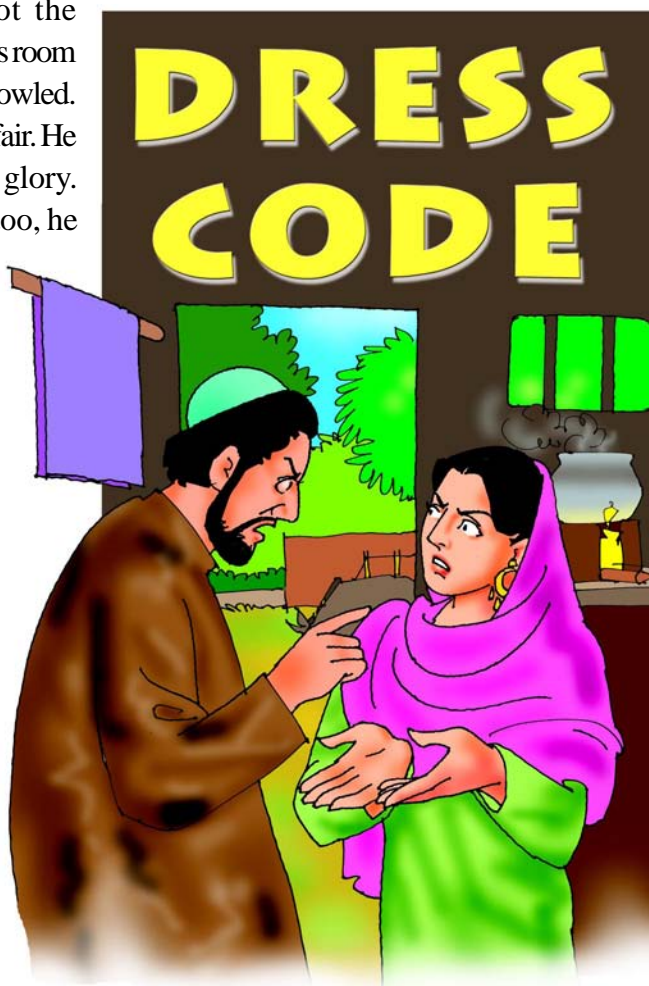
But he had cause for concern. He was never good

at dressing up in a manner befitting his position. His wife chose the clothes for him to wear for every important occasion. But since she was sulking, help from this quarter was well beyond reach.

"Who cares if she won't help? Am I not old enough to know what I should wear?" he pursed his lips.

Why had the Caliph invited him? It was not because he was known to be dressed elegantly. He was no fashion designer. He was invited because he was intelligent, clever. These were qualities that were with him, always. They made him what he was. Not the dresses. Even the best of dress somehow failed to fit him well. He was like that. He was truly brilliant

when it came to handling difficult situations. But he did not have a figure to write home about. Of course in his youth, he was quite a charmer. But time had worked its magic. He had become fat and stout. He looked a little unkempt and uncouth even when he wore dresses stitched by the best of tailors in the land. But why should he bother about the dress? The dress would not make him more intelligent.



So, in the evening, he did not change into new clothes. He looked at the crumbled dress he had been wearing since morning. He found nothing wrong with it. So he strode out, walked up to the donkey, untied the knot of the rope that held the animal to the stake, got on to its back and gently steered it to the royal palace. He got off the animal, tied it to a stake outside the palace, and walked happily to the entrance. Two armed sentries were manning the gate.

He expected them to bow to him and let him in.



Instead they stopped him. "What brings you here?" one of them asked.

"Nasruddin?" the other sentry identified him.

"Ah, since you know who I am, you also ought to know why I have come," Nasruddin beamed a big smile.

"Don't tell me you have come to attend the dinner," the sentry seemed to have some reservation.

"You said it. I have been invited to the royal dinner," Nasruddin replied.

"I believe you. But I can't let you in when you're dressed so shabbily. Don't you know that the leading men of the land will be attending the dinner? They know how to dress in a manner befitting the royal court. You will be a totally misfit in their company. And, then, the Caliph won't be pleased. He'll take us to task for not stopping you at the entrance itself, when you look so ill-kempt to be let into the royal presence," the sentry pointed out.

Nasruddin took a long breath. He checked himself. His dress was dusty and dirty. It was patched up at places. Yet he did not feel bad about it.

"But I'm Nasruddin. I can change the dress, but not change myself," he joked.

"I'm not asking you to change yourself! Just go back home, wear a dress more suited for the occasion and come back," the sentry was firm.

"I'll be back soon," Nasruddin bowed and headed for the spot where he had left his donkey.

Soon he reached home.

He got off the donkey, and tied it to the stake. The donkey brayed. His wife heard the high-pitched notes and came out to check. She saw Nasruddin and his shabby dress and felt amused.

"They turned you away, didn't they?" she asked.

He did not reply. Instead, he brushed her aside and walked in.

"Truth hurts, doesn't it?" she came behind him.

"You and your truths and hurts!" he exploded.

"No need to lose your cool, my dear," she smiled at him.

"The smile does well with you. Now you look beautiful," he smiled.

"Beneath lie the sulk that reminds you of the ugly toad," she reminded him of the argument they had in the morning.

"You silly," he laughed.

"When it comes to being silly, I think we are evenly matched," she too laughed.

Once the laughter subsided, Nasruddin asked her to help him. He requested her to find him the dress he should wear.

“So you concede that you have a poor dress sense?” she teased him while walking up to the shelf. She quickly pulled out the right clothes that he should wear. He got out of the dirty clothes and changed into the ones his wife handed to him.

“Now you look trim and prim,” she eyed him with admiration.

“And so fit enough to appear at the royal court,” he added.

“You said it,” she trailed behind him while he moved out.

He rode the donkey back to the palace.

The sentries bowed to him, stood aside and let him enter. He walked briskly to the banquet hall. He greeted those nobles and courtiers and officials whom he knew. He moved to the presence of the Caliph, sank on his knees, paid homage to the ruler and joined the nobles and courtiers and officials who by now had filled the hall.

Dinner was announced. The Caliph took his place at the head of the huge dining table that could accommodate a hundred guests. Nasruddin sat close to the Caliph. The bearers set the plates and silverware and started serving food. The courses arrived one after the other. None touched the food till the Caliph gave the nod and started eating.

Soon the guests at the table got a shock.

Nasruddin picked the first morsel of food and dropped it on his dress. The guests sitting next to him noticed it, but chose to remain silent. They thought his hand had slipped and the food had fallen on the dress. But when the next few morsels too fell on the dress, they could not restrain themselves.

“Have you gone mad?” one of them whispered.

The Caliph lifted his head on hearing the whisper. Then he saw the food particles streaming down Nasruddin’s dress.

“Out of this hall, this moment, you silly Mulla!” the Caliph chortled with rage.

“But, My Lord! I just did what was expected of me,” Nasruddin spoke firmly, but politely.

“What do you mean?” the Caliph’s voice trembled with rage.

“Is it not true, My Lord, that it is one’s dress that gets him entry to the royal dinner, not the qualities of the mind and intellect and prowess of the guest?” Nasruddin replied.

“Speak out, in plain language, my man,” the Caliph could not make out what Nasruddin had in mind.

“Well, My Lord! When I came in ordinary clothes, I was denied entry. I was told that I was not properly dressed. So I went back and returned in fine clothes. And I was led to your presence. I guessed, therefore,



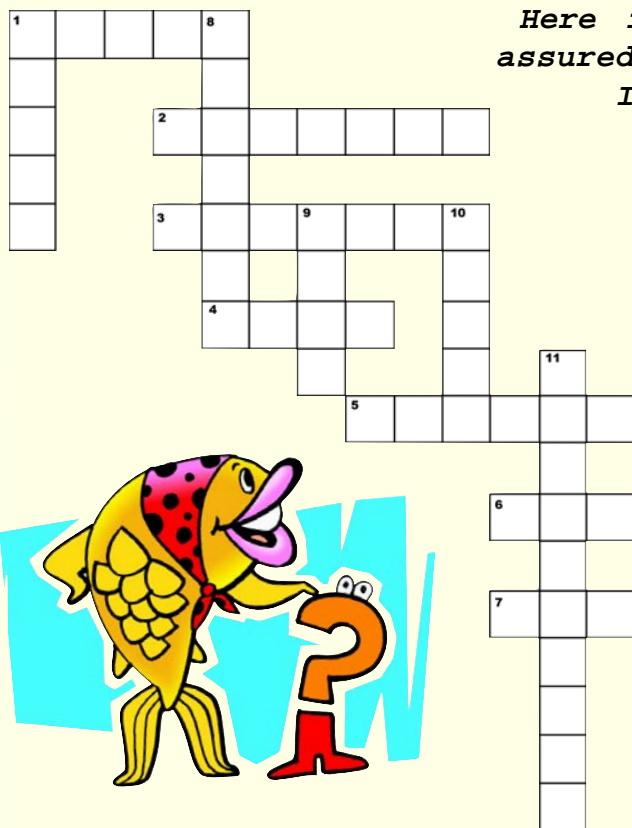
that it is the dress that counts, not the man behind the dress, and therefore, the dinner invitation rightfully belongs to the dress and not to me,” Nasruddin explained, with a straight face.

The Caliph found the reply amusing. “My friend! We have enough food for our guests, the dresses, and also for the carriers of the dresses. Now that you have fed your dress, how about feeding yourself?” the Caliph burst into laughter.

- By R.K. Murthi

PUZZLE DAZZLE

FISH CROSSWORD



Here is a crossword on fish, but rest assured there's nothing fishy about it!
It will give you a lot of fun.
Follow the clues.

Across:

1. Slimy, wiggly bait commonly used in fishing (5).
2. This fish may go 'meow' (7).
3. Small fish named after the sun (7).
4. This has hooks hanging on it which are used to catch fish (4).
5. Largest fish whose zoological name is *Esox masquinongy* (6).
6. Small yellow and green striped fish which has the largest number of species with the greatest variety of any other order of fish(5).
7. Fishing tournaments catch this fish (4).

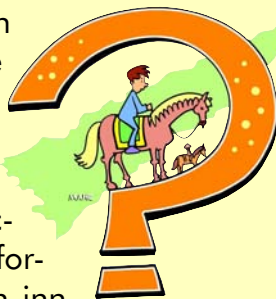
Down:

1. Fish breathe it in through their gills (5).
8. White bird that loves dead minnows and french fries (7).
9. To cook your fish or to toast your marshmallows, this is very essential (4).
10. To get your worm onto the hook, you need to hold your worm with these.....(5)
11. You will be well advised to wear this while travelling in a boat (10).

Sons and Horses

A rich man has two sons. When he dies, the sons read his will. The will says the sons must race their horses to a distant city and the one's horse to get there LAST gets the fortune. So the sons start racing as slow as possible to get the fortune. At nightfall they stop at an inn.

They mention their problem to the innkeeper and in the morning the sons are racing as fast as they can to the city. What did the innkeeper advise them to do?



Answer : He told them to switch horses. So if one son gets there first, he will be on his brother's horse and his horse will be the last and he will get the fortune.

ANSWERS :

Across: 1. Worms, 2. Catfish, 3. Sunfish, 4. Lure, 5. Muskie, 6. Perch, 7. Bass, 8. Seagull, 9. Fire, 10. Hands, 11. Lifejacket.

From Monkey-Prince to Prince-Charming



LEGENDS FROM OTHER LANDS (IRAQ)

Till a thousand years ago, a wonderful song could be heard from the densest part of a forest in Iraq. The king and many others would gather in the morning or in the evening near a rivulet and quietly stand there and enjoy the song. They would not cross the river lest the singer should fly away.

How could a singer fly away? Well, in this case the singer was a golden bird who lived atop a golden tree. Now let us follow the legend and find out how such a tree and such a bird came into that forest.

There was once a king who had six queens and they had a son each. The king thus had six sons. But he had a seventh son, too. The difference between the six princes and the king's seventh son was, while the former were born in the palace, the latter was born and brought up in the forest.

The king was a good hunter and he relished the meat of deer – but of only those which he had bagged himself on his hunting expeditions. The royal kitchen had no dearth of able cooks, but it was customary for the queens to cook the special dish for the king. The queens cooked by turn and the king was never sure which of them had cooked the dish best.

“I’ll slay a deer today and bring it to you. Divide the meat among yourselves and each of you must prepare a dish separately. I wish to know who cooks best,” said the king one morning as he set out for the forest. But as luck would have it, there was no deer to be found. By and by it became noon. The proud king was not willing to go back without a deer. He asked his bodyguard to return to the palace and tell the queens that all was well with him and he would return only after killing a deer. If necessary, he might pass the night all alone in the forest.

Late in the afternoon, the king grew so impatient that he made his horse gallop at great speed along the fringe of the forest. He covered a long distance. The sun was about to set. Even then he did not find a deer, but he found something most unexpected. There stood a deserted palace. He entered and found a young lady seated all alone. The king had never seen a more beautiful damsel than her.



The damsel, a princess, told him her story. A giant had killed her parents and all the people of their small kingdom some five years ago. The giant then wished to marry her. But he was under such a curse that he could not marry a human girl unless he had first fulfilled a condition laid out by her.

The princess had heard about a golden bird living in a golden tree on some island. She had also heard that one who hears its song would grow so noble that he would never be cruel thereafter. The princess asked the giant to get her the tree and the bird.

The giant told her he knew where the tree was, but it was very difficult to approach the tree. If he did not return within a year with the tree and the bird, she should understand that he had perished while making the effort. She could then marry anybody else, but she would give birth to a child that would appear like an ape!



The king could not now resist his temptation to marry the princess. She was taken to his palace. The other queens were aghast when the king returned with a bride instead of a deer! They grew more and more envious of the new queen as the king grew more and more fond of her. But joy returned to them when the new queen gave birth to a male child who looked like an ape!

The king felt so humiliated that he banished the queen to her deserted palace in the forest, though he did not fail to provide her with servants and other facilities to make her life reasonably comfortable.

There was a school run by a great sage, situated near the forest. The six princes studied there. Soon the exiled queen's son too joined them. Though he looked like a baby monkey, the sage could not refuse him admission, for he too was a prince! And before long the sage was delighted, for, the monkey-prince excelled all others in studies. In fact, in one year he learnt ten times more than what the other princes learnt during the same time.

The six princes could not check their envy. One day they set fire to the huts that housed the school and reported to the king that the monkey-prince had done the mischief. The king got his seventh son arrested. In front of the courtiers, he ordered his guards to throw him into an old boat lying unused for long and push it into the sea.

His orders were carried out. But soon thereafter the sage appeared at the court and revealed that the mischief was committed, not by the monkey-prince, but by his step-brothers!

"Bring back the monkey-prince! A great injustice had been done to him!" exclaimed the courtiers. But it was too late. The old boat had been swept away deep into the sea by a strong wind. The agitated courtiers obliged the king to exile the six naughty princes. However, the king put them on board a ship and was sure that they would come back after a while when the anger of the courtiers had subsided.

As chance would have it, the old boat touched an island soon after the six young men had reached it. There were two rivers flowing into the sea – the water of one was a milky white and the other blood red. The six princes on their arrival were warned by a native that those who sailed by the red river would meet their doom, for beside it lived a monster.

The moment the six brothers saw the monkey-prince, they said they had only come in search of him! “We’re so happy to meet you. We’ve sailed along the white river and found nothing. We give you the chance to sail along the red river and find some good luck. We’ll wait here till you come back,” they told their step-brother. But as soon as the monkey-prince sailed along the red river, they left the shore and began their homeward voyage.

The monkey-prince went ahead against the difficult red flow and soon heard some fearsome hissing noise. Looking ahead he saw a terrible serpent with five hoods breathing fire and circling around a golden tree. Atop the tree sat a golden bird. Indeed, he had heard about this tree and the bird from his mother. He mobilized all his strength and jumped on to the serpent’s back and began cutting down its heads.

The moment the last head rolled down, the golden bird began to sing. And what a thrilling song it was! Moreover, the moment the bird sang, the monkey-prince changed into a prince charming!

All the natives of the tiny island gathered there to listen to the bird and find out how it all happened. Soon came the king and the queen of the island as well as their sweet daughter. The king had announced that whoever killed the serpent would marry the princess. The prince charming now married her. In a decorated ship the king sent the couple to the main land. The only dowry the prince cared to take was the golden tree along with the bird. He did not forget to tug his old boat along.

The king could not believe his eyes when he saw his seventh son looking so handsome. He could neither believe his ears when he heard his son’s adventure. But there was the old boat; there was the prince’s unmistakable voice, and there were his escorts from the island to corroborate the prince’s story.

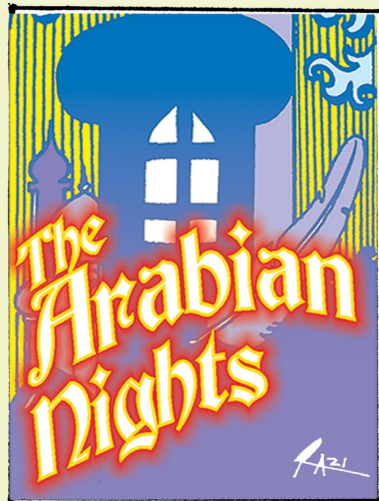
The first thing the king did was to request his seventh queen to come back from the deserted palace in the forest. But she refused. So, the prince planted the tree along with the bird in front of her palace. He and his wife also lived there.

As his step-brothers never returned, it was believed that they could have perished in the sea. The king also died. The prince, along with his wife and mother, came back to the capital. He ascended the throne, but once a week he and his wife went near the golden tree and spent some time listening to the bird singing.

- By M.D.



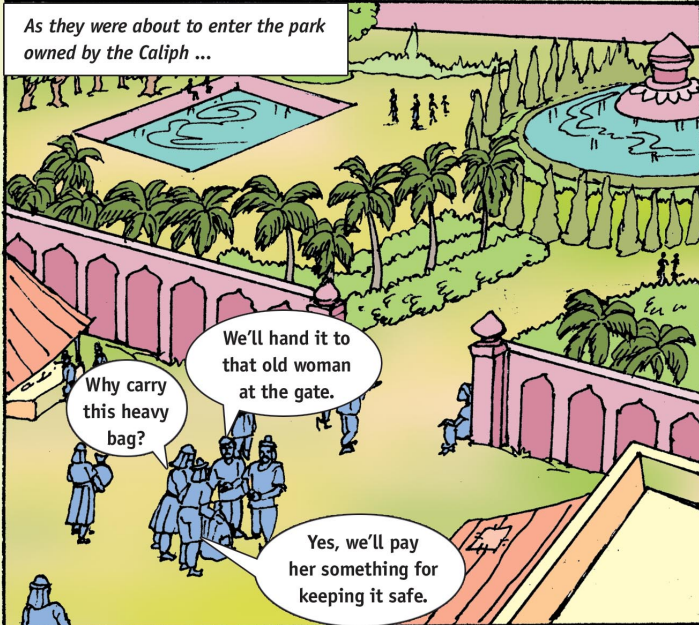
The Arabian Nights : WIT GOES WITH WISDOM



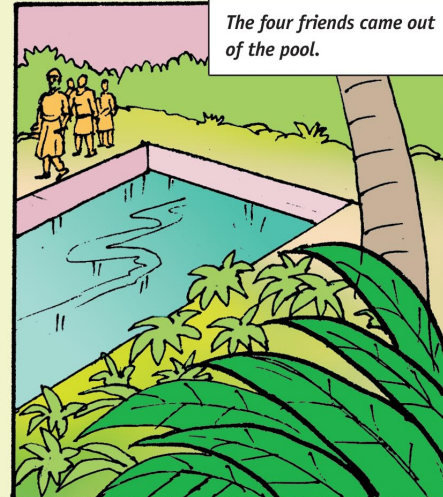
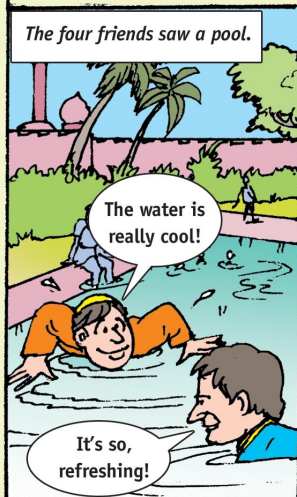
Four young men met at an inn in Baghdad.
They were from different places.



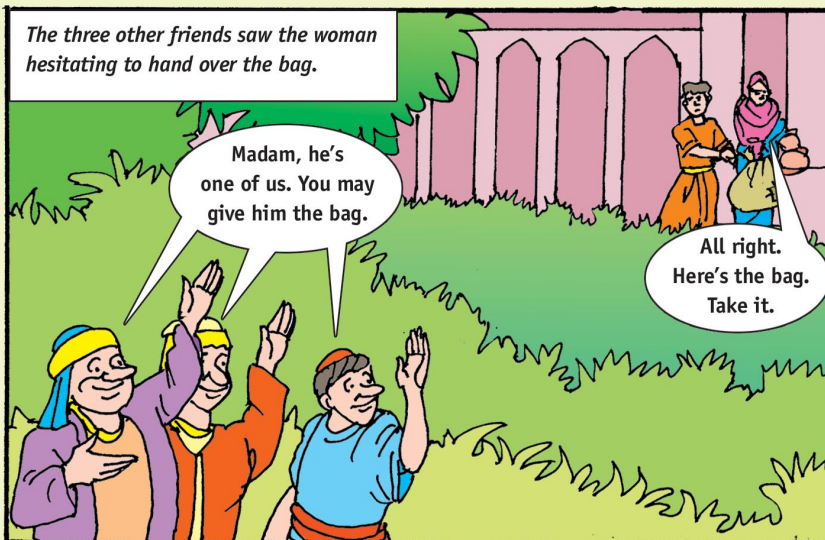
As they were about to enter the park
owned by the Caliph ...



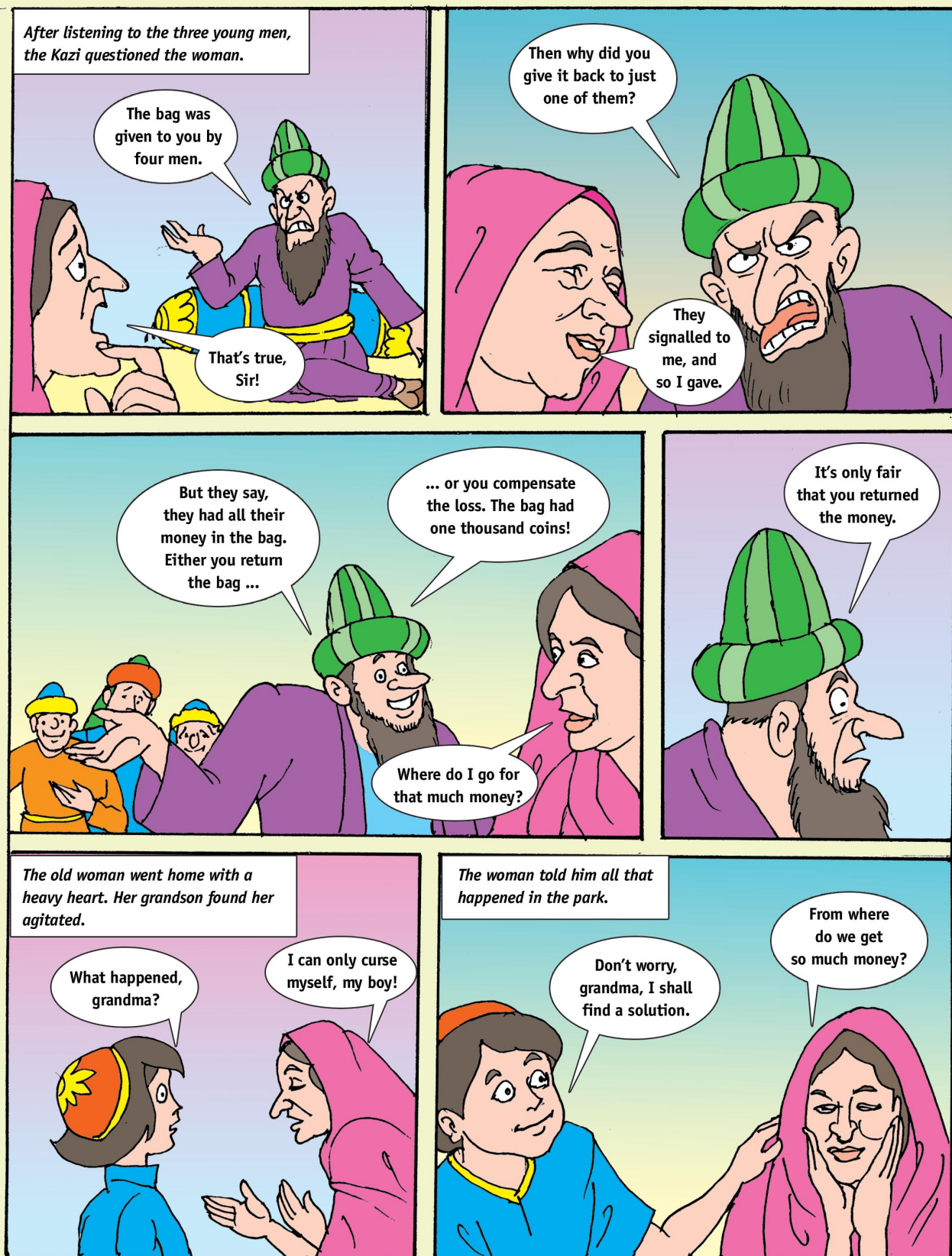
The four friends saw a pool.



The Arabian Nights : WIT GOES WITH WISDOM



The Arabian Nights : WIT GOES WITH WISDOM



The Arabian Nights : WIT GOES WITH WISDOM





THIS HAPPENED IN DECEMBER

more than a thousand test flights. Some of these tests were in wind tunnels, specially made to match the behaviour of gliders under varying wind conditions. These experiments taught them the importance of the direction of the wind and the speed of the air current in controlled flight.

Their success, they realized, would depend on choosing a suitable site where wind conditions would be favourable. From the United States Weather Bureau, they obtained a list of 'windy, treeless, level' sites, examined the suitability of each site and finally they selected the sandy Kill Devil Hills, 6km south of Kitty Hawk, North Carolina.

On September 5, 1900, they set up camp at the site. Wilbur observed birds in flight for several days, noted how birds tilted the wings to change the flight path or to take turns. That gave him the idea for moveable wings. "Thus the balance could be controlled by utilizing dynamic reactions of the air instead of shifting weight," Wilbur noted. This led to 'wing warping', a concept in use on aircraft even today. (Wilbur and Orville were to patent this design later). They mounted a gas-driven internal combustion engine, which they fabricated on their own, on a glider. The engine's body and the crankcase were cast out of a single piece of very thin, light aluminium-copper alloy. It was a four-cylinder 12 hp engine, fuelled by gasoline.

The brothers also assembled an airplane, with four wings. (That made it a biplane. Monoplanes have only two wings). The wings were made of wood and covered by tough linen. Reinforced wires joined the wooden struts. The wires ran from a cradle-like device, on the lower

Brothers Wilbur and Orville were not good at studies. But they were good at handling mechanical things. So their father, Milton Wright, who was the Bishop of Dayton, Ohio, encouraged them to open a cycle repair shop. "Whatever you do, try to be the best. And be honest in your dealings," he told them. They did just that. So their business flourished.

Often they rode cycles over long distances. These escapades gave them a clear insight into wind force and air currents. They chanced upon the book '*Progress of Flying Machines*' by Chanute and read it several times. Their interest in flying was aroused. They spent long hours, preparing models of kites and gliders. They conducted

Wright Brothers Create Aviation History

wing. The cradle provided room for the pilot. He could lie in it and shift his weight around to move the tips of the wing up or down. A tail rudder was added to provide stability while taking turns. Two pusher propellers were linked to the engine by bicycle chains.

At last, the crude contraption was ready. The brothers called it, *The Flyer*. Preparations began in right earnest. Hard wooden rails were laid on the sloping hills. On it rested a trolley with wheels. The airplane was loaded on it. A cable connected the trolley to a pulley on top of a tower. Its free end ran over the pulley and was held down by weights. Once the weights were removed, the trolley would slide down the slope, pick up speed and provide the necessary thrust for the aircraft to get airborne.

On December 14, 1903, Wilbur climbed on to the lower wing and lay flat on his stomach. His hips slid into the padded wing-warping cradle. Orville made the last-minute adjustment to the motor. The propellers provided immense thrust. Orville and a friend, Will Dough, released the weights. The trolley rolled on, picked up speed. Orville ran beside the plane, balancing it with one hand. *The Flyer* lifted off. Wilbur pulled the elevator sharply upward. The aircraft surged to a height of 4.5 m before losing height. It had been in the air for just 3.5 seconds. This was too brief a flight to bring cheer to the two men from Dayton. They decided to conduct another test flight.

Gusty cold winds marked the dawn of Dec 17. But, by 10a.m., the wind speed fell to about 30 kmph. Orville, Wilbur and four others (Bob Westcott, Daniels, Etheridge and Will Dough) hurried over to *The Flyer*, which rattled in the wind. "Heads I win. And tails you go," Wilbur pulled out a coin and tossed it up. The coin spun in space,

came down and rested 'Tails up'. "Congratulations, Orville. You fly first today," Wilbur smiled at his younger brother.

Orville climbed on to the lower wing, lay flat on it, and pulled the bicycle chain that started the engine. The propeller roared. The plane purred with life. Wilbur ran along, while Bob Westcott clung to a stopwatch. Daniels adjusted the camera, ready to record the historic flight. Etheridge and Will Dough removed the blocks from the front of the skids of the trolley. The trolley picked up speed. The aircraft's propeller rotated fast, giving the necessary thrust. *The Flyer* rose with a shudder. Soon it gained a height of about 3.3 metres. For 12 seconds it remained airborne, covering a distance of 36.3m.

The aircraft was taken back to the starting point. Now Wilbur got in. He flew a distance of 53m. The timing could not be recorded. Orville flew next, covering 55m in 15 seconds. On the fourth attempt, Wilbur flew 200m in 59 seconds.

Next day, *The Virginia-Pilot* reported the event. The headlines said: "FLYING MACHINE SOARS IN TEETH OF HIGH WIND OVER SAND HILLS AND WAVES AT KITTY HAWK ON CAROLINA COAST." The sub headings read: "NO BALLOON ATTACHED TO IT."

"TWO YEARS OF HARD, SECRET WORK BY TWO OHIO BROTHERS CROWNED WITH SUCCESS."

"WITH MAN AS PASSENGER HUGE MACHINE FLEW LIKE BIRD UNDER PERFECT CONTROL."

It was a small beginning. Yet it was a major triumph. Years later, Orville noted: "I would hardly think today of making my first flight on a strange machine, even if I knew that it had already been flown and was safe. After these years of experience, I look with amazement on our audacity in attempting flights with a new and untried machine."

Who would have heard of Wilbur and Orville if they had not been audacious and lacked the courage to try the untried? - **By R.K.Murthi**



india's achievements



Gold medal after defeat

India's ace long jumper ANJU BOBBY GEORGE, who failed to win a medal at the Athens Olympic Games, won a gold medal at the Yokohama Track and Field Meet in Japan within a month of the Games. She cleared 6.61m pipping the Olympic gold medalist Tatyana Lebedeva of Russia to the second silver position. Yuka Sato of Japan won the bronze with a 6.44m jump.



A world record

India's BULA CHOWDHURY has become the first woman to cross the seven seas. She swam the 40km Palk Straits between India and Sri Lanka - a 40km stretch between Talaimannar Sri Lanka and Dhanushkodi on the Indian coast - in about 14 hours. The 34-year-old Arjuna Award winner from W.Bengal had earlier swam the English Channel in 1989 and 1999, the Straits of Gibraltar in Spain in 2000, the Tyrrhenian Sea in Italy in 2001, the Torronevs Gulf in Greece in 2002, the Catallina Channel in 2002 and the Cook Straits in 2003. Incidentally, she was the first woman to cross the English Channel twice.

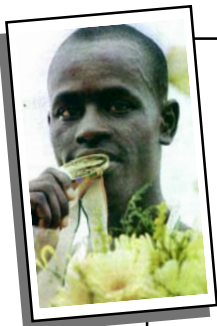


Cricketer of the year

This title by the International Cricket Council was conferred on India's RAHUL DRAVID for his consistent performance between

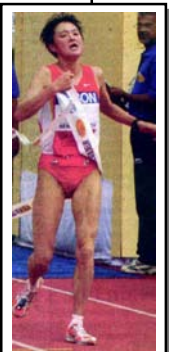


August 2003 and July 2004. Dravid got 82 votes. His average during that one year was 95.46 runs and he had made an aggregate of 1,241 runs. His highest score was 270 against Pakistan in April. India's fast Bowler IRFAN PATHAN (at left) was declared the best bowler among the newcomers. Pathan took 16 wickets in five Test matches and 36 wickets in one-dayers. Andrew Flintoff, the England all-rounder, was chosen the best batsman in one-day internationals. The Spirit of Cricket award, instituted for the first time by the ICC, was won by the New Zealand team. The captains of Test teams from 10 countries formed the jury.



Honour to India

For the first time, India held the World Half-Marathon Championships under the auspices of the IAAF (International Federation of Athletic Associations). The venue was Delhi and the event took place on October 3. Nearly 300 athletes from 70 countries competed for individual and team awards. In the 13th Championships in Delhi, Paul Kirui of Kenya won the gold medal. His timing was 1 hr 2 min 15 seconds. The runner-up was Fabiano Joseph of Tanzania, who clocked 1:02:31. The gold medal for women went to Yingjie Sun of China (1:08:40). The men's team gold was won by Kenya, while Ethiopia won the women's team gold. For Paul Kirui, Delhi's gold medal was his third half-marathon title.



By e-mail from Somarupa Sahoo, Phulbani:

As plants are part of nature, Chandamama has become a part of me. I started reading it just three months ago. This magazine is a source of enjoyment for me. It has immensely helped me to improve my English speech. I like the Jataka Tales, Arya, "Laugh till you drop" and all others. I think this magazine deserves praise and I hope it will continue to entertain many generations of young people.



Reader Madhava Achar writes from Urval, Karnataka:

I have been a fan of Chandamama for the past 40 years. I read both the Kannada and English versions. It is a joyful experience. The magazine (Kannada) has super-sensational stories. But it does not have a section for readers' letters. We readers would like to write about the stories. Its absence is disappointing.

★ **The torch is a common school symbol. Is there any particular significance?**

-P.Ramnarayan, Belgaum

In bygone times, fire was important to a tribe or a group of families. A torch was always kept burning, so that whenever fire was needed, it could be taken from the torch which was not allowed to extinguish. So also the symbol of learning. We learn out of the total learning of people who have gone before us; and we pass it on to our children and those who come after us.

★ **Can a crab really grow a new claw?**

-Bhaskar Chaturvedi, Monghyr

When a crab is growing, it has to cast off its shell from time to time, as a new and bigger one is formed. In doing so, it may lose one of its claws. During a fight with another crab, a limb may be torn off. However, such is the wonder of Nature that a small, new claw will start growing.

★ **What are 'lake dwellings'?**

- Malini Menon, Trichur

In Borneo, Malaysia, and some other parts of the world, whole villages exist by the banks of lakes and rivers. Yet, the houses in which



the people actually live are not on the banks, but are built above the water. Whether they are by a river or lake, these houses are generally called lake dwellings.

★ **Who was the first magacian?**

- G. Venugopala Rao, Vijayawada

Magic is a very ancient 'art'. People have tried to control the force of Nature by means of charms, or incantations believed to have magical powers, as related in mythological stories. Merlin, the legendary wizard of the times of King Arthur, was popularly attributed with magical powers. Some are of the view that he was of demoniac origin. Mirrors, rings, wands, and meaningless words (Abracadabra!) are often associated with magic.

Photo Caption Contest

*Can you write a
caption in a few
words, to suit these
pictures related to
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You may write it on a
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and mail it to reach us before the
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The best entry will receive a Prize of
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S-H-A-K-E ! LIKE THE MILK SHAKE, WHICH IS ONE OF CHILDREN'S FAVOURITE DRINKS, THEY WILL FIND THE 'JCM SHAKE' A DELIGHT!

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KEEPING OUR WATERWAYS CLEAN

Veena's uncle lives in Rampur, a quiet little town on the banks of a river. Veena has always loved to spend her vacation here, mainly because of the river. What fun it is to bathe and sport in its cool waters for hours on end! It is here that she first learnt to swim. Her happiest memories are associated with this river. Almost as soon as she reaches her uncle's house, she makes a beeline for the river, accompanied by her cousins and the other children of the neighbourhood. If mornings are taken up for swimming, the hot afternoons are spent telling stories or just taking a nap on the riverbank, with the trees providing a canopy of refreshing shade.

It has been two years since Veena visited Rampur. Her uncle, who was away on a foreign assignment, and his family are now back, and Veena once again looks forward to her vacation by the river.

But the much-longed for visit turns out to be a heart-breaking one. With deep distress, she learns that the days of frolicking in the river are definitely over!

The river's woes started the day a textile factory was set up in Rampur. Today the water is totally unfit for consumption. Shoals of fish are often spotted, floating belly up on the water! Those who

bathe in the water come down with skin diseases, rashes and itching. Not only that, there have been an increasing number of complaints of asthma, wheezing and lung diseases among the locals!

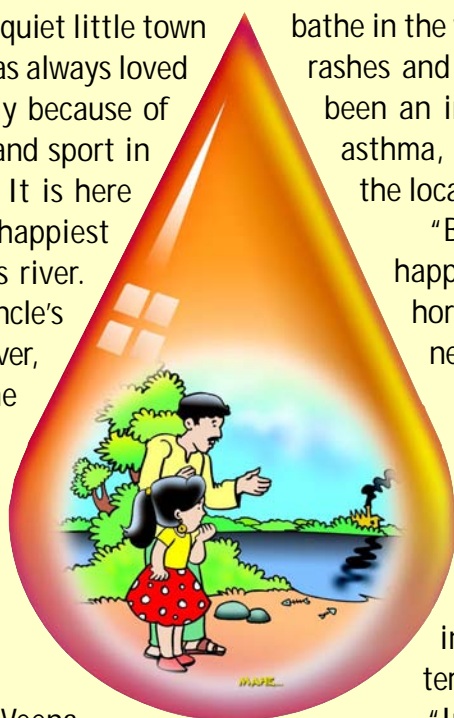
"But why, Uncle? How could this happen to this beautiful town?" asks a horrified Veena, unable to digest the news related by her uncle.

"It is all because of the effluents discharged by the factory into the river," explains her uncle. "Despite pleas from environmental activists, the factory owners are not ready to treat the effluents and recycle it for industrial use. Pollution is something terrible, Veena!"

"Indeed it is!" agrees Veena. "But can't we do something to check water pollution, Uncle?"

"Of course, we can," says her uncle. "One thing we can do is to keep litter, pet wastes, leaves, and debris out of street gutters and storm drains - these outlets drain directly to lake, streams, rivers, and wetlands. Also, don't throw garbage into water - especially stagnant water, as this will create a breeding ground for germs and disease."

"You've given me a lot to think about, Uncle!" says Veena, her eyes sparkling with resolution. "From now on, I shall certainly do my bit to prevent water pollution."



Let's paint a better world

Let's not pollute water



Dear Kids,

Write a slogan on the subject and win prizes.

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